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INDIAN SCULPTURE SERIES—VOL - II

# The Art of the PALLAVAS







*Bhima Ratha : Mamallapuram.*



# The Art of the PALLAVAS

Text and Descriptive Notes

By

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Compiled and Edited

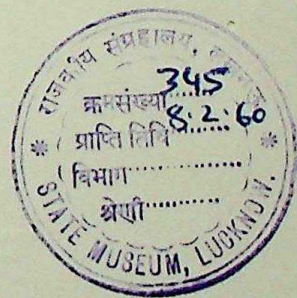
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PUBLISHED BY A. GOSWAMI  
PRINTED BY BENGAL AUTOTYPE COMPANY  
ENGRAVED BY BLOCK & PRINT HOUSE PRIVATE LTD  
BOUND BY ORIENT BINDING WORKS  
PRODUCED BY KAMAL BANERJEE

PRINTED IN INDIA

1957



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## Preface

**D**URING the later half of 1953 I had to move about desperately all over India in search of materials for Indian Temple Sculpture. At that time, while I was touring the remotest corners of South India, I had the opportunity of seeing minutely the remains of Chalukya and Pallava art. Spreading all over the South there are numerous monuments of great proportions showing the exquisite and sublime beauty of Pallava art. It was at that time I got the inspiration of producing a book on Pallava art that would delight art lovers everywhere. The idea was further strengthened when Sri D. Mehra of Rupa & Co., desired to have the book as soon as possible.

The Art of the Pallavas is significant for many reasons. Unlike the Chandelas, the Pallavas ruled over the South for a much longer period of time. In comparison to other parts of India they were not subjected to severe molestation by the Huns or the Mahmud of Ghazni and, therefore, they got some peaceful years to develop all branches of fine arts. If we are to study closely the structural details of Pallava architecture and the symbolic lines of their sculpture—we are sure to find a definite course of development of stylistic individuality more complete and forceful than many other periods. Even the Gupta classicism failed to achieve what the Pallavas gave us.

Within the folds of Pallava Kingdom—from rock-cut temples to huge open-air panels—there are ample evidences of masterly achievements in the field of sculptural traditions. The Anantasayi Vishnu—portraying supreme mastery over the flux of time and irresistible power; the graceful pose of Gaja-Lakshmi; the bas-relief of Mahisasura-mardini in the Mahisa Cave where mother goddess Durga is seen slaying the eternal demon Mahisasura—destined to be destroyed in spite of all his fury and ferocity; the open-air panel of Arjuna's penance with so many different figures of Gods, Goddesses, Apsaras and Animals; the vigorous composition of different Dwarapalakas at Sittanavasal, Dalavanur and Tiruchirapalli must be regarded as marvels in the history of plastic art. I am sure an effort to assess such masterpieces of art must receive appreciation from all quarters.

As usual I must thank my numerous friends and admirers, especially Sri A. Ghosh, Director General of Archæology in India for allowing me to photograph the rare Pallava fresco paintings at Sittanavasal and my photographer Sri N. Ramakrishna for his very sincere works for this book.

*The 23rd September, 1957*

A. GOSWAMI



## Historical Introduction

THE Pallavas as a tribe or clan—existed from about the second century A.D.—but they do not begin to appear on the stage of Indian History—as a dynamic cultural and political force—before the end of the Gupta dynasty (320-647 A.D.) or before the termination of the Andhra dynasty on the banks of the Krishna on or about 236 A.D. That a reigning Pallava dynasty was located at Kanchi (Conjeveram) early in the fourth century A.D. is proved by the Allahabad Pillar inscription dated 340 A.D. according to which the emperor Samudragupta, in course of the *digvijaya*—in the South, came in contact with and vanquished Vishnu-gopa Pallava, king of Kanchi. So that the obscure Pallava clan—was slowly carving out a kingdom in the Tamil land by the beginning of the fourth century. In the earlier century—the Pallavas were reigning in the Andhra region, in the Guntur District carving out a small kingdom immediately after the end of the Andhra dynasty about 236 A.D. From this region they gradually penetrated into the South by displacing the Cholas in the Coromondal coast. The Pallavas were therefore an intrusive element in the Tamil country—representing a different racial, linguistic, and cultural entity—entirely opposed to the character of the Tamil race and civilization of this part of Southern India. The Pallavas recorded their charitable gifts—in the Prakrita and Sanskrit characters, and not in Tamil. One of their earlier kings was a Buddhist—but later they embraced the Saiva religion. They emerged into power and prestige by contracting marital relations with the languishing Andhra dynasty. A Pallava Prince married the daughter of the Andhra king Sivaskanda and thus became the first king of the Pallava dynasty. The son born of this union was Sivaskanda-varman Pallava (circa A.D. 394). That the Pallavas succeeded the Andhras in this region—is proved by the Prakrita Charter from Mayidavalu which mentions, that the Satavahani-rastra (that is to say the regions formerly occupied by the Andhra-Satavahanas) became part of the rising Pallava kingdom. This region is also referred to as the Karmma-rastra—which extended from Bellary to Bezwada—that is to say, over an important portion of the old Andhra empire. These evidences suggest that the Pallavas



were a Northern dynasty, who having contracted marriages with the princesses of the Andhra dynasty, inherited a portion of the Southern part of the Andhra empire.

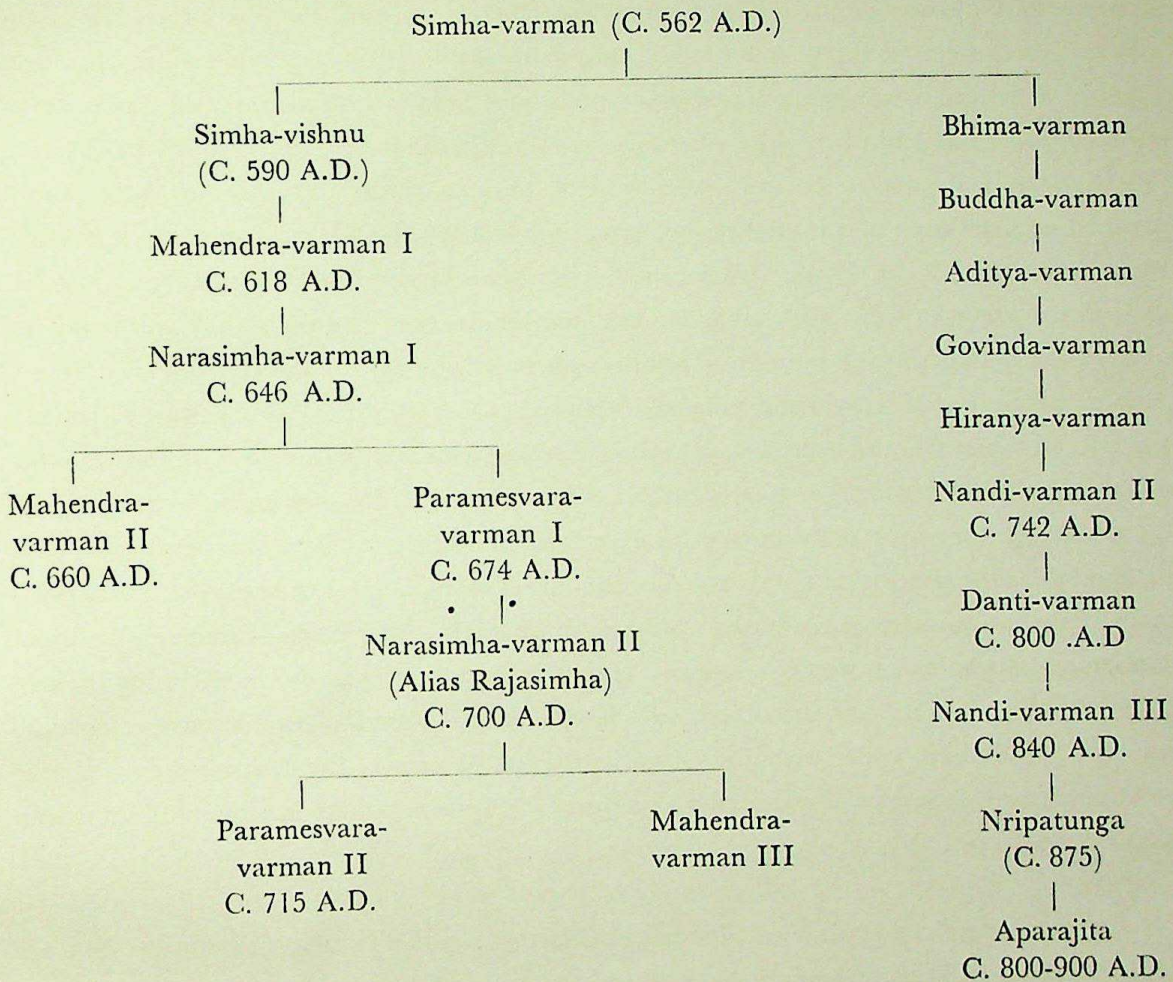
The origin of the Pallavas is surrounded with mystery. At one time, it was believed that they were the descendants of the Pahalavas,—that is to say, the Parthians or Persians from the North-west—a suggestion solely based on the superficial verbal similarity—but this theory has been dismissed as baseless. It is now believed that the Pallavas were a peninsular race, tribe, or clan, either identical or closely connected with the Kurrumbas—an originally non-Aryan (?) pastoral people who play an important role in early Tamil history. The suggestion of a non-Aryan derivation is based on a legend which relates that Pallavas were born of the union of Asvathama (the Mahabharata hero) with a Naga princess of a primitive tribe. According to the legend recorded in the Tamil epic—Mani-mekhalai, the first Pallava king was the son of one Killi—born of an union with a Naga princess named Pilivalai, a daughter of the Naga king of Manipallava. He was lost in a ship-wreck and was found washed ashore with a coil round his ankle of a twig (*pallava*) of the Tondai-creeper (*Caphallandra Indica*). Hence his name—Tondai-man. He became an independent king and progenitor of the Pallava dynasty—and the territory ruled by the Pallavas came to be known as the Tondai-mandalam—the Realm of the Tondai. According to another version—Pallava was born of the union of Asvathama with the Naga Princess. In verse sixth of the Bahur plates—it is asserted “From Asvathama was born the king named Pallava”. The story of a marital union with Asvathama—was probably a priestly concoction to invest a non-Aryan tribe with an Aryan prestige. Whatever their origin the Pallavas were staunch supporters of Shaiva and Vaishnava cults—to which they erected numerous rock-cut shrines.

In fact—when the Pallavas extended their arms into the Tamil regions in the South—establishing their capitals at Kanchi and at the Sea-port of Mahabalipuram—they made—the *first* contribution to the Dravidian School of Architecture. In fact Chola and Pandiyan architecture—are the continuation and development of early Pallava Art. And it is this contribution to the Art of the Tamils—that invest the Pallavas, originally a martial fighting race,—with a significant civilizing role—apart from their military, maritime and commercial activities.

There is considerable confusion—in the various inscriptions of the dynasty—as to the names and succession of the Pallava kings—of the early period. And various scholars have given different genealogise—as reconstructed from the data of the inscriptions. But the succession of the princes of the early Pallava period—has no relevance to the study of the Art of the Pallavas—as the early Pallavas whose reign preceded the 6th century—did not leave any monuments—which really begin with Simha-vishnu (C. A.D. 590). The monuments belong to the branches of Simha-vishnu—and of Bhima-varman—terminating with Aparajita.



## GENEALOGY OF THE LATER PALLAVAS



It is quite possible that the series of Caves at Undavalli near Bezwada, Guntur District (Andhra-desa) may have been excavated by some of the early Pallavas—but they are generally attributed to the late Andhra princes. Anyhow—the style and models of some of the Undavalli caves—their pillar-forms—cults and iconography—provided the sources of the Art of the Pallavas. And the large series of the Cave shrines excavated by the Pallavas from the beginning of the seventh century—in the Tamil country (Arcot and the Nellore Districts)—provided the beginning of the Southern or the Dravidian School of Architecture, though the Pallavas represented a culture different from the Tamils as they hailed from the North as representatives of Aryan or Sanskrit Culture.



Yet the Art of the Andhra School—at Amaravati, Nagarjunikonda, and Nal—on the banks of the Krishna, chiefly illustrating Buddhist culture,—did not influence the Art of the Pallavas, although the early Pallavas—reigned in the Andhra-desa—for a time—until they penetrated into the Tamil country (Coromandal) establishing themselves at Kanchipuram (Conjeveram) in the heart of the Tamil land.

The first great achievement of a scion of the Pallava dynasty was the conquest of Kanchi by Kumara-vishnu also called Vijayaskanda-varman, possibly about the year 300 A.D. This is for the first time recorded in the Velurpalaiyam Plates. That Kanchi was wrested from the Cholas—is hinted in the same inscription which states that king Buddhavarman was designated as “the submarine fire to the Ocean-like army of the Cholas”. This Pallava conquest was celebrated by the performance of the Agnishtoma, Vajapeya and Asvamedha Sacrifices,—sacrifices which denote the acquisition of an empire. Very probably after the conflict of Vinshnu-gopa with Samudragupta (C. 330 A.D.)—the Pallava power was weakened—and the Cholas had re-occupied Kanchi—which was wrested from the Cholas a second time by king Simha-vishnu (C. 590 A.D.) whose portrait in relief sculpture is depicted on the walls of the Adi-varaha temple at Mahabalipuram. Dandi, the great Indian poet, who lived for a time at Kanchi during the reign of Narasimhavarman II, seems to refer to this second conquest of Kanchi—in his poem—*Avantisundari-katha*. The poet in order to flatter Simha-vishnu says that by conquering the town from the Cholas, Simha-vishnu freed the Scholars from adversity. That Simha-vishnu’s conquest of the “country of the Cholas embellished by the daughter of Kavera”—included a large part of the Tamil regions—is proved by the reference (in an old inscription) to a village in Kumbakonam taluk—known as Simha-vishnu-Chaturvedi-mangalam.

At any rate, for a period of 125 years from the time of Simha-vishnu—the Pallava throne remained in the occupation of the direct successors of this king,—beginning with his son and heir.

This was Mahendra-varman I (C. A.D. 600 to 630) known by many surnames : Mattavilasa, Gunabhara, Chitra-megha etc.—whose reign was memorable from many points of view. In the first place—successful civil administration provided peace and security for the pursuit of civic occupations and the culture of Literature, Music, and the Monumental Arts. The king had originally developed interest in Jainism, but by the preaching of the famous Saiva Saint Appar—he was converted to be a staunch worshipper of Shiva (according to Periya-puranam)—and the chain of rock-cut caves set up by this king is all dedicated to Shivalingam. The famous farcical drama—*Mattavilasa prahasanam* is attributed to this king. The long musical text inscribed on the rock at Kudimiyamalai (Pudukkotta State)—is believed to have been executed by Mahendra-varman. Of many works of public utility—mention may be made of several large tanks for drinking water, excavated at



Mahendra-vadi, Mamandur and Dalavanur. The reign of Mahendra-varman synchronized with the decay of Buddhist and Jain religions—and with the revival of the Hindu-Bramhical cults. But the most remarkable event of the reign was the beginning of wars with the Chalukyas led by Pullakisin II of Badami—which continued for several generations. According to the Aihole inscription—the Chalukyan invader “caused the splendour of the lord of the Pallavas, who had opposed the rise of his power to be obscured by the dust of his army and to vanish behind the walls of Kanchipuram”. But according to the Pallava records at Pullalura (modern Pallur, Conjeveram taluk)—the army of Pulikesi II was finally defeated by Mahendra-varman I.

Narasimha-varman I otherwise known as Mahamalla succeeded Mahendra-varman on the Pallava throne about A.D. 630 and continued to reign up to about 660 A.D. One of the most remarkable sovereigns of the dynasty of Simha-vishnu, he considerably enlarged the Pallava empire. The maritime capital of Mamallapuram (Mahabalipuram) the city of Mahamalla, so-called after his name was—enlarged and embellished by new rock-cut shrines. The Dharmaraja Ratha at the Seven Pagodas is ascribed to him—and is inscribed by several of his surnames. The second memorable event of his reign—is the visit of the Chinese Pilgrim Hiuen-Tsang who stayed at the Pallava Capital for a considerable time (about 642 A.D.) and recorded the fact that the ships go to Ceylon from the port of Mahabalipuram, crowded with many ships riding at anchor and carrying all kinds of merchandise. The third important event of this reign—is the visit of Manava-Vamma, a Ceylon prince who came as an exile to Kanchipuram seeking the aid of Narasimha-varman I to restore his seat on the throne of Ceylon. The Pallava king fitted out a big army and himself accompanied his troops as far as the harbour on their voyage to the shores of Ceylon. This invasion of Ceylon proves—the far-reaching powers and political strength of the Pallava empire. But the most glorious achievement of the reign—was Narasimha-varman’s invasion and capture of the Chalukyan capital of Vatapi (modern Badami)—which won him the famous title—of the ‘Destroyer of Vatapi’. This expedition was placed under the command of General Siru-tonda also called Paran-joti.

About A.D. 660, Narasimha-varman, the Mahamalla, died having raised the Pallava power to a glory unprecedented in its history. He was succeeded by Mahendra-varman II who had a short but peaceful reign probably up to the year 674 A.D. According to the Kuram Plates, Mahendra-varman II was a legislator “who thoroughly enforced the sacred law of the castes and the orders”.

The next reign was that of Paramesvara-varman I (C. 674-680 A.D.). He had a number of surnames—Atyantakama, Chitramaya, Gunabhajana, Sribhara and Rana-jaya. He appears to have excavated the Ganesa temple at the Seven Pagodas. Various other temples, including a structural temple at Kuram are ascribed to him, who made an elaborate



donation to this temple, providing for divine service, sacrifice, and recitation of the Mahabharata. The most important event of his reign was the invasion of Kanchi by Chalukya-Vikramaditya I. The Udeyandiram Plates and the Kuram Plates—provide a realistic and thrilling account of the great battle at the site called Peruvalanallur (Trichinopoly District). Vikramaditya's first assault on Kanchi, though first successful, finally ended in disaster. As the Kuram Plates assert,—“Paramesvara-varman I, unaided, made Vikramaditya, whose army consisted of several *laksas*, take to flight, covered only by a rag”. The next reign that of Narasimha-varman II—better known under the title of Rajasimha (C. 680-700 A.D.)—was a peaceful reign free from foreign invasions and devoted to pious acts of building many temples,—all structural shrines—and not rock-cut temples. The most well-known of these temples—are the famous Kailasanatha temple (also called Rajasimhesvara), the Shore-temple at Mahabalipuram,—the Airavatesvara temple at Kanchi and the Panamalai temple. Rajasimha—had a number of surnames—indicating his devotion to Shiva ;—Risavalanchana, Sri-Sankara-bhakta, Sri-Vadya-Vidyadhara, Sri-Agama-priya, Sri-Pratimalla, Shiva-cudamani, etc. His chief queen Ranga-pataka is associated with the creation of a part of the Kailasanatha temple, attested by an inscription. Apart from temple-building, the reign of Rajasimha was one of intense literary activity. The great poet and rhetorician Dandi is said to have come and stayed at the Pallava Court at Kanchi during this reign. There is a tradition that Dandi's *Kavyadarsa*, the famous text-book on Poetry, was composed by him—for giving lessons in rhetoric to a royal prince at Kanchipuram, very probably the son of Rajasimha. There is also a tradition that many of the dramas of Bhasa—were abridged for performance on the royal stage of the Court of this Pallava king.

The next reign that of Paramesvara-varman II (C. 700-715 A.D.) was a short one. According to the Kasakkudi Plates—this king followed the policy (*niti*) prescribed by Brihaspati, and he protected the world. He erected in the third year of his reign—a new temple at Tiruvadi—known as Virattanesvara temple. The Vaikuntha Perumal temple at Kanchipuram is also attributed to him.

After the death of Paramesvara-varman,—the last representative of the direct line of Simha-vishnu,—the succession to the Pallava throne—passed to a collateral branch—that of Bhava-varman—of whom the three last representatives were—Danti-varman (C. A.D. 826) Nandi-varman III also called Pallavamalla (C. A.D. 846 to 849), and Nripatunga (C. A.D. 849 to 875). According to the Kasakkudi Plates—there was a change of dynasty on the death of Paramesvara-varman II and that Nandi-varman III (then known as Pallavamalla) was chosen by the people to occupy the Pallava throne. This dynastic evolution also seems to be graphically indicated—by the series of historical reliefs—depicted on the walls of the Vaikuntha—perumal temple (Kanchi) with explanatory inscriptions. But there is considerable difference of opinion among Scholars as to the exact period of the reign of this new king. According to some,—the reign period was 840-875 A.D., according to others, it was 770-775 A.D.



## THE ART OF THE PALLAVAS

Anyhow, the most important event of his reign was the invasion of Kanchi by the Chalukyan emperor Vikramaditya II, the representative of the natural enemy (*prakriti amitra*) of the Pallavas. The reigning king re-captured Kanchi—and continued to carry on the administration un-dismayed and un-interrupted by the Chalukyan invasion. But his reign was marked by many other military engagements, sieges, invasions, and counter-invasions—of which the siege of the fort Nandipura by the Tamilians, the Rastrakuta invasion of Kanchi, and the king's expedition against the Gangas—were the most outstanding events.

Nandi-varman—Pallavamalla's leanings were towards Vaishnavism—rather than Saivism. His copper plates describe him as never accustomed to bowing “excepting to the pair of worshipful feet of Mukunda”. He made gifts to several hundred Vedic Scholars, Chaturvedis and Shadangavids—of whom the most famous was one Jeyshtapada Soma-Yajin. There were several Sanskrit scholars and poets attached to his court—e.g. Paramesvara, Uttara Karanika, Trivikrama and the famous Vaishnava divine—Tirumangai Alvar.

Among the new temples attributed to him—the most important are the Vaikuntha-perumal temple and the Muktesvara temple at Kanchi, the Kesava-perumal temple at Kuram, the Virattanesvara at Tiruvadi, and Kunrandar Kovil at Pudukotta.

The next king was Nripatunga-varman (C. A.D. 849 to 875)—who was on his mother's side connected with the Rastrakuta king Amoghavarsa. The patronage of Vedic learning which made Nripatunga famous is proved by his generous gifts of three villages—to a Vedic College at Bahur—near Pondicherry.

The last king of the Pallava dynasty was Aparajita-varman (C. A.D. 875 to 883). The important event of his reign—was a campaign against the Pandyas—aided by the Ganga king Prithivi-pati. The battle was fought at Tirupurambian (near Kumbakonam) about the year 880 A.D. The only monument of his reign is perhaps the Virattanesvara temple at Tiruttani (near Conjeveram), with a dedicatory inscription in Tamil verses said to have been composed by the king himself. But in the meantime—the Chola king Aditya (887-907 A.D.)—progressively growing in strength—stretched his conquering arms towards the Pallava country and defeated the Pallava king Aparajita-varman, and added the Tondai-mandalam (the realm of the Pallavas) to his dominions. Thus the kingdom of the Pallavas passed into the hands of the Cholas—with the death of Aparajita. Beginning about the year 200 A.D.,—the main Pallava dynasty—terminated about 900 A.D., covering a period of 700 years.



## The Beginnings of Pallava Art and Architecture

THE MAHENDRA STYLE (A.D. 610-640)

THERE was a view, propounded by Longhurst that the Pallava dynasty—while still ruling in their homeland on the banks of the Krishna—in the Guntur District—had probably excavated their first rock-cut shrines—which are represented by the series of three-storied caves at Undavalli (eastern and western slopes of the Indra Kila Hill). It is quite possible that the Undavalli Shrines—with a long relief panel of the Ananta Sayana Vishnu—one of the earliest prototypes of a similar panel at the Varaha Cave (Seven Pagodas)—exacavated by a Pallava prince—and are *prima facie* the earliest attempts in this direction before the Pallavas were driven South by the Chalukyas and executed similar but better caves in the Tamil country. There are no inscriptions to support such a plausible suggestion. On the other hand, it is improbable that the Pallavas at this early time of their career could have acquired sufficient political status or adequate financial resources to undertake such gigantic architectural enterprises—represented by the three-storied temple of Undavalli 90 feet in length and 50 feet in height. But there is no doubt that these earlier caves probably executed by the Andhras or the Vishnu-Khandins—had provided models and motives and inspired the forms of the earliest Pallava rock-cut shrine—after they established themselves in the Tamil country. This tradition of excavating rock-cut shrines may have come from the Vakataka dynasty at Ajanta—transmitted later to the Vishnu Kandins. As suggested by G. Jouveau-Dubreuil (*The Pallavas*, Pondicherry, 1917, pp 27-35) that the earliest Pallava Style in Art—that of the Mahendra-varman Style—is of Telugu origin—having been formulated at Undavalli by the predecessors of the Pallavas. There are convincing evidences to support the assertion “that the Caves of Undavalli are the works of the Vishnu-Khandins”—not of the Pallavas—whose first attempt is naively and joyously asserted in the exultant expression of Mahendra-varman in his poetic record inscribed in the Mandagupattu Cave (South Arcot) his first essay in excavating a temple. Before we



come to study this significant beginning of the Pallava Style—it is necessary to consider—the motives and stylistic manners of the Undavalli Shrines—which no doubt provided the models from which the Pallava Style was derived—and many elements of which are anticipated in earlier shrines at Bezwada.

The Order of the Undavalli Architecture—is embodied—in the square shaped pillars—with octagonal faces at the centre. The cubical parts of the pillars are sometimes ornamented with lotus flowers and sometimes with lions. To this style of pillar—is added a plain capital—spreading in two directions—the corbell of which is decorated with a series of indentations or mouldings in scrolls (Jouveau-Dubreuil : *Dravidian Architecture*, Fig. 19. p. 26 and Fig. 25. p. 33).

The Second element of this Order—is the projecting convex moulding (*Kabodham*) punctuated by a series of horse-shoe shaped gabled windows (of Budhistic Origin) called by the name of *Kudu*—by the Pallava Sthapatis. These so-called windows or openings carved in relief—usually contain—heads of Gandharvas of auspicious significance (*Gandharva-mukham*). The third element—are the Dwarapalakas—the predecessors of the Pallava Style—in Sculpture.

With these peculiarities, ornamental and symbolical motifs—the Caves of Undavalli—provide the nearest approximation to the style of the Caves of Mahendra,—the originator of Pallava Architecture. With these superficial similarities it is easy to be tempted to say that the Undavalli Caves were excavated by the Pallavas—as suggested by Longhurst.

#### THE MANDAGAPATTU CAVE

The corrective to such an erroneous theory is, however, provided by the dedicatory verses of Mahendra-varman—inscribed on his first Cave-Shrine at Mandagapattu :

“This is the temple caused to be constructed by the (King) Vicitra-Chittra (a surname of Mahendra) for Bramha, Isvara and Vishnu, *without bricks, without timber, without metals, and without mortar*”.

“The naive exaltation of Mahendra-varman I when he saw his first rock-cut cave-temple finished, goes on even through the English translation of his inscription. It is the joy of a child who has seen a structure of sand in a playground and who on reaching home succeeds with himself in making one similar to the model” : “I have also made one myself”, he cries exultantly. Had Mahendra excavated the caves of the Telugu country, or had his father or grand-father carved them, he would not have been able to write the preceding inscription. The Mandagapattu Cave is undoubtedly the first Cave by Mahendra-varman,



and incidentally the first cave-temple ever carved in the Tamil-nadu, after the specimens seen in the valley of the Krishna" (H. Heras : *Studies in Pallava History*, Madras 1933, pp. 80-81).

The surname Vicitra-chitta,—‘one having a curious, æsthetic mind’,—is significant—as it embodies—the creative inclination of the pioneer builder—in the dynasty of the Pallavas—the innovator of a new architectural style in the Pallava culture-area. As a personage with strong æsthetic leanings this king provided considerable impetus to art-productions—in the field of drama, music, painting and other arts. The style of this Cave is quite primitive and crude—without any manner of ornamentation—on the simple typical pillars, square at the top and the base, and octagonal at the centre. The facade has no ornamental cornice—as in the next excavated Cave at Pallavaram. The only carvings are the two standing Dwarapalakas—at the extreme ends—similar in shape and coiffeur but different in poses—as each stands leaning on his club. As suggested by the inscription—that the temple was dedicated to the three gods Bramha, Vishnu and Shiva—for which there are three socket-holes, indicating that a stone image once stood in each niche, forming three separate shrines.

#### THE PALLAVARAM CAVE

Next in point of time—is the Cave at Pallavaram (Chingleput District). The plan and style of the facade is very similar to the Mandagapattu temple except that the former has no door-keepers like the latter temple. The cornice is a heavy projecting convex moulding with two string-courses, with ten punctuated divisions—but with no *Kudu* openings. Still archaic in style—this temple is one of the earliest works of Mahendrarman.

#### TRICHINOPOLY CAVE TEMPLE

The next shrine excavated by Mahendra appears to be a shrine excavated half-way up the rock at Trichinopoly designated as the “Upper Cave”. With no moulding at the top, the facade consist of four typical Pallava Pillars—with lotus ornaments carved on the surface,—decorations not met with at the two earlier shrines described above. In the Cave at Trichinopoly which carries no inscription—we find a developed form of pillar—not square but multi-faced and crowned by a bulbous finial like a cushion (see Jouveau-Dubreuil, *Archeologie du Sud de L’Inde*, Tome I, 1914, plate XXI, p. 98). This Cave must be later than the “Upper Cave”.

The two Dwarapalakas on either side of the sanctum—facing each other and leaning on their clubs—are designed and moulded in finer forms than those in the earlier Caves. But



the great advance—in the style of sculptural decoration—is provided by the well known masterpiece of the Gangavatarana-lila of Shiva—depicted on a large panel opposite—the entrance to the shrine. This is a complicated composition of five figures—magnificently woven into a moving picture harmoniously patterned—telling the story—in the grand manner of an epic. It is the first anticipation of the later developments of Pallava Art—in the domain of Sculpture. In this early phase—Pallava Sculpture—was almost exclusively confined to low and high reliefs—intimately associated with the architectural designs and patterns. As a matter of fact Pallava Sculpture—grew out of the facades of Pallava Architecture. Mahendra-varman—the accomplished leader of art-activities—boasted of a string of surnames—indicating his different accomplishments—Gunadhara, Purusottama, Satya-sandha, Abanibhajana, Sankirna-jati, Narendra, Alapta-kama, Kalahapriyah, Lalitankura, Satrumalla, Vicitra-chitta and Chettya-kari,—the last of which is very significant—of his activities as a ‘Maker of Shrines’ (Chaitya).

### THE VALLAM CAVE-TEMPLE

This shrine—situated two miles to the east of Chingleput, is a small temple—with two pillars, and appears to belong to the early part of the Mahendra period. It was excavated not by the king himself—but by one Skandasena—a vassal of the king. The two Dwarapalakas in this Cave (Jouveau-Dubreuil : Pallava Antiquities, Vol. I, 1916, plate VIII) are of some distinction—in their graceful poses—of the *avanga* flexion—leaning on the club by left hand, and the right-hand attached to the hip. If the Dwarapalakas in the various Caves could be placed in sequence, they could provide—the steps—in the gradual evolution of Pallava Sculpture.

### MAHENDRA-VADI TEMPLE

In the evolution of the Mahendra Style—the small shrine with two pillars at Mahendra-vadi (near Arconam, North Arcot District) appears to be stylistically related to the Vallam Shrine—and must be of the same date. As the inscription indicates—“Gunadhara” (Mahendra) dug the Cave and designated it as “Mahendra-Vishnu-griha”—in the city of Mahendra on the bank of the ‘tank of Mahendra’. The pillars have lotus-reliefs on their facades. But the Dwarapalakas (Plate XIII, B, Pallava Antiquities, Vol. I) are given in new poses—without clubs—but distinctly refined in their free standing postures—of a novel design.

### DALAVANUR TEMPLE

This shrine cut in a small hill called “Pancha Pandava Malai” (Tindivanam Taluq, South Arcot)—is a late temple in the Mahendra Style. This is evident in the elaborate



and deeply cut facade—with a long moulded cornice—punctuated with a series of five *Kudus* with heads of Gandharvas—each *Kudu* being surmounted by a finial in the forms of a “Shovel-head”. In later temples—the shovel-head is replaced by a lion (Seven Pagodas).

But the most important new feature—at Dalavanur—is the evolution of the double-arched “*tiru-vachi*”—the *makara-torana* design—represented in a carved relief—below the cornice (*prastara*) and spread over the upper parts of the pillars. The Dwarapalakas—are differently posed—but are of no particular merits.

## MOGALARAJAPURAM TEMPLES

These three small rock-cut shrines—are in a village three miles to the east of Bezvada—and in their primitive simplicity are nearer in style—to the Undavalli Caves—rather than to the temples of the Pallavas. The only distinction is that Temple No. 1—is a triple-celled shrine—to provide for images of Shiva, Vishnu and Bramha—which have now disappeared. This group probably represents the transitional stage of Pallava Style—than the Pallava Style proper. The facades of the Temples No. III and IV—have corbelled top, deeply cut, and punctuated by false *Kudu* openings. The heads inside the three *Kudus* in Temple No. IV are effigies of Shiva and Parvati, and of Bramha and Vishnu—instead of the usual head of Gandharvas. On the facade of the rock—above the frieze on the top of Temple IV—there are remains and faint outlines of a large Dancing Nataraja on the prostrate effigy of demon,—of remarkable beauty and design. This is the earliest representation of Nataraja—in the Tamil country. This proves that the Lila-murtis of Shiva (Cp. the Gangadhara Panel at Trichinopoly) had already been formulated and represented by the seventh century.

## SIYAMAMANGALAM TEMPLE

This cave-shrine situated at Desur (North Arcot) appears to be related to the Vallam and Mahendravadi and Dalavanur Shrines. The name of the village—Simha-mangalam—carries an early Pallava association—originally called Simha-Vishnu-Chaturvedi-mangalam—carrying the name of Simha-Vishnu father of Mahenda-varman I. The plan of the temple—is the same as that of Mahendravadi. The Dwarapalakas recall those of Vallam. One of the pillars carry on the top—a relief of a lion—the standard of the Pallavas. But the most important sculptural feature of this shrine—is the lively picture of a Pallava warrior brandishing a shield and a sword—placed inside a niche (*deva-kostha*) placed between two developed pillars—carrying a well designed *makara-torana* (*tiru-vachi*).

## BHAIRAVA-KONDA TEMPLE

This group of eight rock-cut shrines have been excavated on a rock near Udayagiri



(Nellore District). They appear to have been excavated at different times—the Temples No. VI and VII being very late in time as compared with the earlier ones viz. No. I to IV. This is evident from the developed shapes of the columns—and the introduction of seated lions on the capitals. In the earlier Caves of the Mahendra period—the plain cubicle forms of the columns are common features. It is when we come to the monuments of the Mamalla Period (e.g. those of Seven Pagodas) that we meet with for the first time—columns in Pallava Architecture—decorated at the base with seated effigies of lions—a late feature which also occurs—in four of the cave-temples at Bhairava Konda. The door keepers of some of these temples—(I, II, III) also reveal some distinctive features—viz. wearing thick tufts of hair—and horned head-dresses. Another new feature—is the representation of relief figures of Bramha and Vishnu—placed near the door-keepers. Temple No. II and VII bear inscriptions—purporting to be the names, of two architects—‘Chamachari of Dhirukamthi’ and of “the famous Acharlu of Karuvadi”. They appear to be late inscriptions—and not contemporary with the original excavations.

#### TIRUKKALUKKUNRAM TEMPLE

There are two excavated shrines on the Vedagirisvara hall—popularly known as the Pakshi-tirtham—nine miles south-west of the Chingleput railway station—on the road to the Seven Pagodas. The lower Cave known as the “Orukal mandapa” (one-stone shrine) has a plain unornamented facade—with two plain cubicle pillars—in simple and severe style—suggesting an early date, somewhat related to the Mahendravadi Shrine. But the door-keepers—two near the entrance of the *garbha-griha* in crude style—contrast with two other elaborately carved Dwarapalakas—facing each other in the verandah—in very sensitive and significant poses—which mark a new stage in the evolution of Pallava Sculpture. Though the Cave itself belongs to the time of Mahendra or earlier—the two door-keepers in refined style may be of a later date. The inscription—in the Cave—offers a problem. The record purports to refer to a renewal by a Chola king of the original grant made to the temple—called the “temple of Mulasthana” by the Pallava king Skandasisya and later renewed by Narasimha-varman I. If Skandasisya stands for Skanda-varman one of the earliest kings of the dynasty (Chendalur Plate)—then this Mulasthana Shrine—must be one of the earliest Hindu temple in Southern India. The other cave-shrines of this period—include the Kuranganimuttam, Singa-varam, and the small Kilamavilangai Shrine, a niche without any architectural feature. The Singa-varam temple—enshrines an Anantasayana relief which Jouveau-Drubreuil assigns to the time of Mahendra I. The Kilamavilangai Shrine,—a single cell,—enshrines—a standing four-armed Vishnu—one of the earliest presentation of the icon.

The two caves at Mamandur (North Arcot District) are very much akin in style to the Vallam and Mahendravadi Caves. There are remnants of frescoes on the facade of this Cave—which proves that pictorial art was practised from the time of Mahendra-varman I.



## MAMALLA PERIOD (C. 640-674 A.D.)

A new era of Pallava Architecture—was introduced by Narendra-varman I, son of Mahendra-varman, who died about the year 640 A.D. The new king also bore several surnames of which the most significant was 'Mahamalla' (The Great Athlete) or Mamalla. He began his building career by founding and building the Sea-Coast town of Mamallapuram, vulgarly called Mahabalipuram or the Seven Pagodas,—the site of the seven rock-cut temples.

The site was originally known as *Kadal-mallai-Talasayanam*—or the 'Mountain near the Sea'—an obscure fishing village dating from Pre-Pallava times. According to Heras—this sea-coast town was founded by Mahendra-varman, father of Mahamalla. Anyhow—this sea-coast capital and the port of the Pallavas—achieved an unique grandeur and reputation as the birth-place of South Indian Architecture and Sculpture. The rock-cut temples and sculptures—constituted one of the most brilliant pages of Indian Art—surpassing in some features the products of the Gupta Period.

It is possible that some of the monuments of the Seven Pagodas were built not only by Mahamalla and his son Paramesvara-varman—but also by Mahamalla's father Simha-Vishnu. This seems to be supported by two memorial portraits with identifying inscriptions—of the two kings—father and son—Simha-Vishnu and Mahendra-varman I—excavated—inside the Adi-Varaha temple, Seven Pagodas—first studied by Krishna Sastri—in his *Memoirs* No. 26 (1926).

The monuments of this place—are conveniently divided under three classes—Cave temples, Rathas, and Rock-Sculptures. At Mamallapuram, we find Pallava Art in a new transition. This change of style is indicated by the change of form of the pillars—and of the style and types of the door-keepers. We first come across—in the style of Mahamalla—a new type of pillars—with lion base,—a novel form of caryatid consisting of a squatting lion—carrying a bulbous capital surmounted by a large abacus (*palagaye*)—not met with in the earlier Mahendra Period.

The type of the Dwarapalakas and their postures also change in the new epoch. All of them dispense with the club—and they all turn straight towards the shrine. A new iconographic feature develops—in connection with the Linga. Close to the Linga—and on the wall at the back—the Sculptors add a relief of the composite composition of the *lila-murti*—of Somaskanda-murti—a group of Shiva and Parvati—with Skanda placed between them.

## DHARMA RAJA'S MANDAPA

Perhaps the earliest monument of Mahamalla at Mamallapuram—is the Dharmaraja's



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mandapa which, in its archaic style and plan with massive pillars with corbel capitals,—has very close resemblance to the Mandagapattu temple of the Mahendra Period.

## TEMPLE NO. 3 AND TRIMURTI CAVE

The next stage in the evolution is represented by a Shrine known as Temple No. 3 and the Trimurti Cave. Both of these cave-shrines—have elaborate carved tops or finials—running over the cornice with *kudus*—all carved on the facade of the rock—and continuing a string of *Panjaras* (small pavilions in relief). The series of these pavilions over the top of the Trimurti Shrine—are very elegantly designed—with fine proportions—the row of the *kalasas* being very delicately curved.

The pillars of the back row in temple No. 3—in their elegantly decorated and multifaced forms with cushion capitals recall similar pillars of the Badami Caves—which the wars with the Chalukyas must have made familiar to the Pallava architects. But the three Images of Shiva, Vishnu and Bramha delicately carved in high relief—on the back walls of each of the cells—mark the first step—in the birth of Plastic Art—of the Pallavas—marked with exquisite grace, proportion and expressed in postures of remarkable beauty—which provide—the first formulation of Icons of the Southern School—which persist—in various stages of development—in the Chola stone-images and bronzes. The standing *mahisa-mardini* relief—on the facade of the Trimurti Cave—is one of the earliest icons of this goddess in South India. The three pairs of door-keepers on both sides of the entrances—are very sensitively modelled and exquisitely carved in high relief with great restraint and dignity.

## THE SIX RATHAS

Of the Six Rathas—carved out of living rocks in the shape of cars (rathas), and popularly designated as Draupadi's Ratha, Arjuna's Ratha, Sahadeva's Ratha, Bhima's Ratha and Dharmaraja's Ratha,—the first two appear to have been excavated first and the last one—was excavated last, begun at the time of Mahamalla and completed during the reign of Paramesvara-varman. All of these Rathas are of different shapes and patterns—and were most probably translations in stone of contemporary timber and brick temples current at the time.

The Draupadi's Ratha—dedicated to Durga—is a curious type—imitating the thatched roof of a Bengali hut. Above the door way, guarded by two female guardians (*dwara-kanyaka*) there is a beautiful *makara-torana* carved in low relief. Inside the cella—is a standing figure of Durga in bas-relief—a four-armed figure placed on a lotus pedestal with two male worshippers kneeling at her feet and four little *ganas* flying over her head.



The Arjuna's Ratha—stimulating a two-storied structure—crowned by a *stupika*, octagonal in shape, enshrines—a peculiar trident-headed effigy of Shiva. The most interesting feature of this shrine—is a series of rectangular panels in low relief—on its three facades—of various standing figures, one a rider on an elephant—very delicately carved—marking a progress in the development of Plastic Art of the Pallavas.

The Sahadeva's Ratha—is a peculiar form, apsidal in plan and elevation—apparently conforming to the *Vesara* Order—fashioned in the form of an elephant's back (*gaja-pristha*). It is the continuation of the apsidal cave-temple at Bhaja and Karli. The temple may have been dedicated to Indra. The Bhima's Ratha—is of different pattern—an elongated structure—with the *Sikhara*—in the form of the back of an elephant (“waggon-roofed”)—a very unusual type. The gable faces of the shrine—are decorated with a *kostha* (niche) surrounded by six seated lions on pillars three on each side. The cornice of the gable-ends—carries effigies of *makaras*. The Darmaraja's Ratha, is a lofty and pyramidal roofed shrine crowned by a *stupika*, resembling Arjuna's Ratha—and is the most important of the series—in its imposing elevation. According to the two inscriptions on the temple—it was the “Isvara (Shiva) temple of Atyantakama Pallava” which was the surname of Narasimha-varman I, also called Mamalla. But apart from its elevation—the relief panels on its facades—are important landmarks of Plastic Art and of Shiva Iconography. On the ground floor the corner panels illustrate in delicately executed reliefs—effigies of Shiva and of Ardha-narisvara. On the upper storey—obstructed by a low wall of the verandah in front—really a *pradakshina* passage—there is a series of panels depicting the sixteen *lila-murtis* of Shiva—which were frequently represented in later sculptures of the Chola Period. That a full fledged Shaiva Iconography had developed by the time of Narasimha-varman (C. 640-674 A.D.)—is proved by the series of panels on the Dharmaraja's Ratha. The Ganesha temple—is an elegant little shrine, exquisitely planned and beautifully executed. Somewhat resembling the Bhima's Ratha—its crown (*Sikhara*) in the form of an elephant's back (*gaja-pristha*)—is decorated with a series of *kalasas*—which lend an elegant beauty to this compact structure. On the ground-floor facades—there are a series of effigies of standing heroes—(mallas) meant to symbolize the Pallava princes.

The Valai-jankuttai Ratha, resembling Arjuna's Ratha—but inferior in proportion and decoration—does not really belong to the group of the six important Rathas described above.

## VARAHA MANDAPA

This cave-shrine—in the typical cave-style of the Pallava temples—is one of the most important monuments of the Second period—indicated by the developed form of the lion-pillar—in prismatic faces—crowned by a cushion-shaped capital—akin to the Chalukyan



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Style. Above their capitals there are corbel-brackets which give them a very wooden appearance. The most impressive feature of this temple is a series of four large panels in relief—which are important documents of Pallava Plastic Art—two panels depicting Durga and Lakshmi respectively—while two others depict the story of the Dwarf Incarnation—rescuing the Earth from the Cosmic deluge. The last one is a masterpiece of dramatic design of epic quality surpassing all other presentation of the theme in its æsthetic grandeur.

## MAHISASURA MANDAPA

This cave-temple—is another outstanding monument supported by the developed type and pillars of the late Mamalla Period—which lend to the shrine—a distinctive beauty and dignity. But the shrine represents—the highest water-mark of Pallava Art—in the two great masterpieces—of relief-sculpture—in large size—facing each other—the War of Durga (with the demon Mahisasura), and the Anantasayi Vishnu. Rarely has the story of the Quelling of Mahisasura depicted with such dramatic movement and emotional intensity and with a visual realism—worthy of a master-artist. The comments of Rev. Heras on this panel are worthy quoting :

“The beauty of this new representation of the Mahisasura-mardini is increased by the numerous figures that have been put round the two main ones. The fight of the *Devi* and the *asura* was not a subject grand enough for the creative power of that unknown genius ; he happily introduced two armies, the army of Durga and the army of the Mahisa, the result being the creation of a new scene, the most impressive carving of Mahabalipuram. The Mahisasura Mandapa is a painting in stone”.

The other panel—of greater power—in depicting tranquillity and repose—visualizing the sleeping Vishnu—whose sleep is guarded by two giants (Vishnu-duta) whose gestures and movements emphasize the tranquillity of the sleeping figure. It is undoubtedly one of the greatest masterpieces of Indian Sculpture—contributed by the Pallavas. The earliest representation of the topic—is in the Deogarh Temple (Jhansi) and in the Undavalli Cave at Bezvada, the primitive presentation of which—here attains the highest culmination of technical excellence.

## KRISHNA MANDAPA

This temple—represents the Pallava artist's contribution to Vaishnava Art. Though not of equal æsthetic rank of the Varaha Mandapa and the Mahisasura Mandapa the two panels—representing the Milking Scene (*go-dohana*) in Brindavana and the Giri-Govardhan story—are of unique interest. In the last panel we have the first representation of Radha—in



association with Krishna—an association omitted in the *Sri-Madbhagavata*. Here we visualise for the first time—Radha—standing in close proximity with Krishna—providing the spiritual and physical inspiration to the Great Hero—in the heroic feat of uplifting the Hill Govardhana.

## PENANCE OF BHAGIRATHA

We now come to the last masterpiece of the Mamalla Period—the so-called Arjuna's Penance—now correctly identified as the Penance of Bhagiratha—to move the mighty Ganges to descend to the earth.

“The Central crevice between the two boulders is intended to represent a river, where *nagas* have been carved. It is no less certain that on the top of these works there was a reservoir of water, remains of which are still to be seen, and that in front of the Sculpture there was a kind of a lake, which is still now in a shadowy existence. Thus by this overflowing stream of water the whole picture was in-geniously converted into a living scene of the Himalayas. Two *nagas* are joyfully playing with the water in the middle of the stream ; here a Brahman goes back home with a large pot of water on one of his shoulders, there a deer is approaching the stream to appease its thirst. Above two swans are in pose to plunge into the water ; below numerous ascetics are performing their penance round a small shrine of Vishnu. On the other side of the river a cat, wishing to imitate these ascetics, take up the same posture of penance by lifting its whole body on its hind legs and raising its front paws above his head. In the meantime the little mice of the forest, on seeing their enemy in such an ecstatic, harmless posture, run about fearlessly here and there and even seem daring enough to worship him as their god. The same scene is beautifully depicted in the *Mahabharata* (Udoyaga parva, ch. 100, stanzas 1616-ff., Bombay Edition, 1920) as having taken place on the banks of the Ganges. We cannot deny that the unknown artist who transformed that bulk of stone, besides being a wonderful master in depicting the natural scenes of the forest, and the neighbouring haunts of the river—probably the Ganges—had also a keen sense of humour”. (Rev. H. Heras : *Studies in Pallava History*, Madras, 1933 pp. 91-92).

The other items in the composition—which deserve notice—are the temple of Vishnu, and above the temple—the figures of Bhagiratha—and Shiva. The temple (modelled on the rathas of Mahabalipuram) contains a small standing image of Vishnu—whose presence is called for by the details of the legend of the Descent of Ganga. For, after losing her way in the tangled locks of Shiva—Ganga was detained by Vishnu—who ultimately released her—and She emerged from the foot of the God—in her race to reach the earth. But the penance of Bhagiratha was undertaken to obtain the grace of Shiva—who is seen in this stone-picture—standing before Bhagiratha—in an attitude of grace—appeased by the severe



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penances of the Saint. According to Longhurst—the four-armed figure of Shiva, carrying his trident and attended by three fat goblins (*ganas*), appears to represent that deity in the form of Bhikshatana,—arriving at Bramha-Kapalam in the Himalayas.

The group of elephants at the bottom of the right part of the crevice—forming a part of the large picture—provides a magnificent rendering of the habits and characters of elephants—rendered with masterly realism and consummate skill. More astonishing—is the presentation of a “Monkey Family”—a small group—near the large panel which Coomaraswamy characterised—as the most profound and penetrating analysis of the Monkey that has ever been found in Asiatic Art. This will close our summary survey of the Art of the Mamalla Period.

## RAJASIMHA PERIOD (C. 674-800 A.D.)

The third cycle in the evolution of Pallava Art is represented by the monuments of king Rajasimha—otherwise known as Nandi-varman II. His long reign of about 25 years—appears to have been a peaceful period—free from foreign invasions. There was therefore ample opportunity to build significant monuments. Rajasimha’s original contribution—was to make the first attempt in the South—to set up structural temples—the earlier shrines of Mahendra-varman and of Mamalla—being all subterraneous shrines excavated inside hills and rocks—and carved shrines of the Rathas—none of which is a built-up structural temple.

The first essay in this new innovation in temple-building with the help of stone-slabs piece by piece—is the significant Shore Temple at Mahabalipuram—erected almost on the edge of the waves of the sea, the Lamp-post (*dipa-stambha*) now being immersed in the water. The Shore Temple really consists of two shrines clustered together—their slender elegant towers (*vimanas*) providing a new sky-line—unknown in the earlier monuments. It is a new development of the sombre monolithic form of Dharmaraja’s Ratha—its pyramidal shape—being refined—in more light, elegant proportions. The sanctum which enshrined a prismatic *lingam*—is also decorated by a relief-panel on the wall—depicting the group of Somaskanda. In a cell between the two shrines—is a relief panel of an Anantasayana—perhaps a later addition. The Shore Temple was surrounded by a low boundary-wall (*prakara*) now in ruins. There are a series of carved panels on the facade of the surrounding wall, somewhat damaged and effaced.

Another smaller shrine at Mahabalipuram—also attributed to Rajasimha—is a simple one-cell temple that of Mukunda Nayanar, one mile north of the village along the sea shore. It seems to be earlier than the Shore Temple. A third temple—at



Mahabalipuram—known as Olakkanesvara Temple, on the Varaha Mandapa has been assigned to this period.

### KAILASANATHA OR RAJASIMHESVARA TEMPLE

But the culmination of the Pallava Style—is found in the Rajasimhesvara temple at Kanchipuram—built by Rajasimha—on an elaborate plan—in much more larger dimensions than the earlier Shore-temple—and crowned by a more majestic *vimana*.

According to the records of the inscriptions—the Central Shrine was built by Rajasimha who named it “Rajasimhesvara” after himself—and his son Mahendra-varman III appears to have completed the shrine. The elaborate plan of the Rajasimhesvara Shrine—begins with—a *mukha-mandapa* (supported by 12 pillars) which opens into a long *navaranga* (supported by 6 pillars) from which approaches the *garbha-griha*—which is surrounded by nine smaller shrines—each having independent entrances. The *garbha-griha* itself has an independent *pradaksina-patha*. On the wall at the back of the *linga*—is a large panel of Somaskanda. But the most important feature of the plan—is the broad circumambulating passage—which goes round the whole shrine—and the passage of which is faced by a row of small temples crowned with a *stupika*. Each of these small shrines contains the representation of several *lila-murtis* of Shiva, carved in stone and then covered by plaster. “From an iconographical point of view—this vast collection of Saiva deities, symbols and legends depicted in the bas-reliefs must be quite the largest and most complete in India, and should prove a veritable mine of information to the student of Saivism” (Longhurst).

The pyramidal tower of the Central Shrine of the Rajasimhesvara Temple—is divided into three main stages or storeys, rising to a total height of 50 feet and is crowned, by a little finial technically called a *stupika*. This tower anticipates—the higher tower of the Brihadesvara Temple at Tanjore, built three hundred years later. One outstanding feature of the Rajasimhesvara Style—is the use of *rampant* lions, instead of seated lions—for the pillars and pilasters. This is a new development absent—in the earlier phases of Pallava Architecture.

An addition to this great Pallava Temple at Kanchipuram—a smaller temple—called Mahendra-varmesvara Temple was set up by Mahendra-varman III, son of Rajasimha.

In front of the main shrine—engraved on the archaic pillars—is a long inscription of the Western Chalukyan King Vikramaditya II—recording his invasion of Kanchipuram—and his visit to the temple—and recording his grant to the shrine. The practice of having moveable *utsava-murtis* in bronze moved about during festivals—must have been as old as



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the Pallavas—for we find that there are in the collection of this shrine—a number of bronze images—which if they are not as old as the temple itself—must be in replacement of earlier images. The Kailasanatha Temple marks the culmination of Pallava Architecture—developing the two earlier styles of Narendra-varman and of Mahamalla.

## VAIKUNTHA PERUMAL TEMPLE

Another important monument of this epoch is the Vaikuntha Perumal Temple, erected by Paramesvara-varman II (son of Rajasimha)—one of the few large Pallava Temples dedicated to Vishnu (Perumal). This shrine bears a close resemblance to the Kailasanatha Temple. Though smaller in dimension—its central tower—is equally imposing. The *pradakshina* passage runs inside the shrine. There is a pillared enclosure—inside the temple—the walls of which are covered by bas-relief panels; many of them bear inscriptions recording the political history of the Pallavas—and the succession of the Pallava Kings represented by effigies. This is an unique series of Historical records visualized by inscribed reliefs of the kings.

## NANDI-VARMAN PERIOD (C. 800-900 A.D.)

The crushing defeat of Nandi-varman Pallavalla (C. 800-840 A.D.) in the hands of Vikramaditya II appears to mark the beginning of the end of the Pallava Supremacy. At any rate,—the brilliant career of Pallava Art after 800 A.D. seems to be on the decline. And during the last period (C. 800-900 A.D.)—we meet with very few Pallava monuments worthy of notice.

Nandi-varman Pallavamalla is supposed to have reigned for about 50 years. But it is not clear—who are the kings actually reigned after Nandimalla—before the Pallavas were ousted by the Cholas. Names of three kings appear in the inscriptions—Danti-varman, Nripatunga-varman (C. 849-875 A.D.) and Aparajita-varman (C. 875-883 A.D.). After the large Pallava temple, that of the Vaikuntha Perumal (Conjeeveram)—the last few monuments of the Pallavas become smaller and smaller—proving the decline of their resources.

## MUKTESVARA TEMPLE

Of these declining years—the Muktesvara Temple and the Matangesvara Temple both of Kanchipuram—are the typical monuments. The Muktesvara—is a small shrine—standing on a high basement 8 feet from the ground and approached by a flight of steps. The plan is a simple one—consisting of the sanctum, 7 feet square, faced by a pillared porch 12 feet



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square—with a tower resembling that of the Dharmaraja Ratha. But the low-relief sculptures and the exterior ornamentation, and the Somaskanda panel within, are typical of the Rajasimha period. From an inscription on the temple dated in the 28th year of the reign of Nandi-varman—it appears that the temple was built and endowed by a Pallava queen named Dharma-mahadevi.

The Matangesvara temple, smaller in size and less ornamented follows the model of the Muktesvara—with two lion-based columns in front, and has been ascribed to Nandi-varman Pallavamalla. The interesting development in the late phase of the Pallava Style—is marked by the Dwarapalakas of this temple with four hands, most of the earlier types having two hands.

## BAHUR TEMPLE

This temple, built in former French territory, between Pondicherry and Caddalore—is earlier than the two temples described above. It is larger in dimension—and contains—three covering deities (*avarana devatas*) on its three facades enclosed in the niches. But the most interesting feature—is the form of the pillasters and pillars—square slender forms with cushioned crowns—approaching the coming Chola Style—but the corbel—with indented projections—is still in the usual Pallava Style. The *Kudus*, terminating in a lion-face, and surrounded by “flames” enclose the head of a Warrior, instead of the Gandharva, and marking the last stage of the development of this architectural element of auspicious and decorative symbolism. Bahur Temple stands in the intermediate stage between the style of the Pallavas and that of the Cholas.

## THE APARAJITA STYLE (C. 850-900 A.D.)

The last of the Pallava builders—was king Aparajita who was defeated by Aditya-Chola. So that the temple of Virattanesvara at Tiruttani (near Arkonam) built by Aparajita—is the last landmark of Pallava Architecture. Curiously it is an apsidal temple of the Vesara type—with a tower not of the pyramidal shape—but with a rounded form—like the back of an elephant—with a plain facade—evidently modelled on the Sahadeva's Ratha at Mahabalipuram. On its facades—are four covering deities—in relief, placed inside niches—those of Shiva (*Daksina-murti*) Ganesa, Vishnu and Bramha. The Dwarapalakas at Tiruttani—are four-armed figures—leaning on the club. The temple was very probably built about the year 879 A.D.—the year of Aparajita's battle with Varguna Pandya. The temple was actually built by a certain person named Nambi-Appi in the 18th year of King Aparajita—who is said to have composed a verse in Tamil in honour of the temple which is engraved on the southern wall of the *vimana*.



## THE ART OF THE PALLAVAS

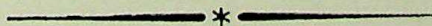
The relief sculptures on the facades of this temple of Aparajita—are in a developed style—which verges on the style of the Chola School.

## VADAMALLISVARA TEMPLE

Vadamallisvara Temple (Oragadam) very much akin in style to the Virattanesvara Temple, just described—in a small village at Oragadam—6 miles to the south-east of Chingleput railway station and built on a hillock. It is a compact and simple shrine—apsidal in form—with a porch in front of the sanctum. The tower is crowded by a series of three *kalasas*. The temple itself contains no inscription, but on a boulder, south-west of the hillock, contains two inscriptions of two Chola kings : Raja Kesari-varman and Rajendra Chola I (1011-1012 A.D.) which record a donation for lamp for the temple (?). Very probably this is a Pallava Temple of the reign of Aparajita.

## GUDIMALLAM TEMPLE

Of the same apsidal form—is the old Parasuramesvara Temple at Gudimallam near the railway station of Renigunta. The inscriptions on the temple prove that two Pallava kings Nandi-varman and Danti-varman made gifts to the temple in the early part of the ninth century. But the shape of the temple—is akin to the temple of Aparajita Style described above. It may therefore be taken—to anticipate the Style of Aparajita—though—not actually built during his reign. A Chola inscription records that this temple was rebuilt in 1126 A.D. during the reign of Vikramachola Deva. But the most remarkable feature of this temple—is the peculiar iconography of the *lingam* here enshrined. The *lingam*—realistic in shape—is faced with the full standing figure of a two-armed Shiva placed on the head of a dwarfish demon—Shiva's two hands—carrying a *parasu* (axe) and a ram (dead animal). He wears matted locks round his head—but the form of the locks—is not pyramidal. This form of Shiva certainly recalls—the Yaksha figures at Bharhut, similarly posed on the heads of demons.





## Criticism and Comparative Review

HAVING made a fairly complete, if not an exhaustive survey of Pallava Sculpture—from its beginning through the three stages of development—Mahendra Style (600-625 A.D.), Mamalla Style (625-674 A.D.), Raja-simha and Nandi-varman Style (674-800 A.D.), and Aparajita Style (800-850 A.D.),—we are now in a position to appraise the emotional and subjective values, and the technical plastic achievement of an art having a continuous and consistent course of development from 'crude' beginnings to a full-fledged and refined expression—in the Mamalla Period—in the magnificent monoliths and cave-sculpture—at Mahabalipuram (Seven Pagodas)—illustrated in the large series of masterly reliefs—in the Varaha and Mahisa-mardini Caves—particularly—in the panel of Vishnu-Anantasayin (Plate 20), Mahisasura-mardini (Plate 19) and Varaha lifting Prithvi-devi (Plate 14)—which undoubtedly take their place in front rank—in the whole history of Indian Art—excepting the great masterpieces of the Rastrakuta School at Elura and Elephanta. In interpreting these solemn topics from the Hindu *pauranik sagas*—the Pallava artists catch the mystic grandeur of the themes and visualise in a spirit of new form of Realism—the thrilling and elevating tales of the Saivaite and Vaishnavaites legends—and take us to the heights of celestial regions when we ordinary mortals grasp for breath.

The Art of the Pallavas really begin from the large panel at Sesa-sayi Vishnu—in one of the upper caves at Undavalli—which some archæologists assign to Pre-Pallava times. If we compare this primitive version with the magnificent presentation of the same theme—in the Mahisa-mardini Cave—we are at once struck by the depth, restraint, and 'classical' feeling—which runs through every inch of this great stone-picture—and realise—to what height of technical achievement the Pallava sculptor reached—apart from a profound interpretation of a cosmic myth—Vishnu sleeping between the intervals of two æons of creative processes.

But this culmination of the style was not quickly achieved and we can follow step by step the progress of the style—in the chronological sequences of the monuments.



## THE ART OF THE PALLAVAS

The Pallava artist—did not invent his types entirely from his own imagination and he fully utilized his opportunity to study living types—from the heroes, *mallas*, and the commanders of the army of the Pallavas,—types which he soon idealised into brilliant and articulate anatomical patterns—which spread over all their monuments—in significant artistic type—characteristic of Pallava Art. In fact the title *Mahamalla*, 'the Great Wrestler', the surname of Narasimha-varman I (630-660 A.D.)—from which is derived the name of the sea-port city—Mahamallapuram—the 'City the Mahamallas'—symbolises the military prowess—and the conquering arms of the Pallava kings—and provides the basic typology of Pallava Sculpture. It first appears in the *dwarapalaka* type on the facade of the earliest cave-temple at Mandagapattu (Plate 3)—where it appears as a fierce forbidding warrior—with his large inflated tufts of hair—peeping behind the conical cap—and surrounding both sides of the head at the back. There is no doubt that this type is actually borrowed from the *mallas* of the Pallava army. The type goes through some modification on the walls of the later caves—but it attains its final development—and a slender elegant form—in a highly conceived artistic type—on the facades of Arjuna Ratha—where this idealised type is used not only in presenting portraits of the kings—but also in presenting the iconographic form of Shiva as Vrisava-Vahana. The great masterpieces in this series on Arjuna Ratha—are reproduced in Photogravure Plates (Rupam No. I, 1920, No. 27-28, October 1926). The last named plate presents a Royal pair—Narasimha-varman and his Queen.

The series of the 'Wrestler type' depicted on Arjuna Ratha—achieve a refined idealism—emphasized by the repeated verticalism of the figures—set into plain rectangular niches—giving an artistic support to the heavy horizontals of the over-hanging capitals and cornices. Incidentally, the group of reliefs demonstrates the fundamental architectonique character of Pallava Plastic Art. It is so intimately related to the architectural pattern—that they seem to grow out of the niches and panels of architectural designs and have no independent existence apart from the architectural frame-work. This is no doubt the basic character of all early schools of Indian Sculpture illustrated at Bharhut, Sanchi and Mathura. But in the Pallava monuments of the early seventh century—sculpture appears to renew an intimate relationship with architectural plans—emphasizing and decorating all features and components of architecture—pillar, supporting walls, entrances and entablatures so intimate—is the marital relationship between Architecture and Sculpture—that it is difficult sometimes to distinguish between the decorative and iconographic role of Pallava Sculpture. In Greek and in Renaissance monuments we no doubt come across similar intimacy between sculpture and architecture—but in Pallava monuments we find sculpture rooted deeply into architectural plans and motives—from which the sculptor never succeeded in extricating himself—playing eternally the role of the servant to the builder of the temples. So that, throughout the whole history of Pallava Art—we never come across free independent statuary—except perhaps—in some rare bronze pieces—somewhat dubiously assigned to the



Pallava School (see Stella Kramrisch : An Early South Indian Bronze, Rupam, No. 42-44, April-October 1930).

The only free sculpture that has come from the chisel of the Pallava carver—is the great Monkey-Family (Plate 27). The exception proves the rule—that Pallava Plastic Art is essentially and fundamentally architectural in character—growing out of the depths of structural plans of temple-building. That in many cases—this so-called decorative or iconographical sculpture—rises far above the fetters of architectural frames—and appears to achieve an independent status almost making us forget its architectural strappings—is due to the supreme inventive genius and superlative quality of the products of the Pallava artist.

It follows as a matter of course—that the entire corpus of Pallava carvings—are either Low Relief or High Relief Panels—mostly pulsating with impassioned devotional emotions—fulfilling the demands of generations of religious devotees and pilgrims—who, for centuries, flocked into these cave-temples—with their offerings of flowers, fruits and coins. Not only streams of pilgrims flowed into that temple-city of Mahamallapuram—in their thousands—but the architectural and sculptural glories of the cave-temples—attracted expert architects (*vastu-sastra-jña*) and connoisseurs of carver's art (*taksa-marmma-vicaksana*) as is picturesquely recorded in the poet Magha's *Avanti-sundari-kātha* (*Iti srutva tatah pritastam visrija pare'hani | suhridbhih saha tam desam yayau tena ca silpina || Athottararanga-bhangali-vilasad-vahu-lilaya | Nrtyantamiva gambhira-mambhorasim dadarsa sah ||*) so that the great artistic monuments on the sea-beach at Mahabalipuram—received not only the popular tributes of simple, un-educated pilgrims—but also extracted the high praise of educated critics, connoisseurs and expert sculptors—who admired the lithic masterpieces—in the captivating natural background of the foaming seas which sometimes rolled into the sanctorum of the Shore Temple—carrying the tributes of the ocean-god.

Excepting in the few large iconographic presentation of Durga, Gaja-Lakshmi, Varaha and other images for worshippers provided in the cave-temples at Mahabalipuram—the art of the chiseller is almost exclusively confined in ornamenting and embellishing—architectural pieces—principally—in giving piquant plastic shapes to the columns and pillars—of the cave-shrines. Thus in the Durga-Cave (Plate 18), the Bhima Ratha (Plate 10), and Pancha Pandava Cave (Plate 21), the architect shapes the upper part of the pillar—and the sculptor provides a strutting figure of a lion for the base of the pillar—the architect and sculptor collaborating—to produce an unique type of Caryatid—in which the supporting human figure is replaced by the effigy of a lion (Plate 42). The Caryatid is first met with in Gandhara and Mathura Schools—but the device for first time appears in the South in Pallava Art—destined to develop into new forms in Chola and Pandiyan Art.

The mithuna-motif—as a mystic masonic symbol does not occur, as such, in Pallava



## THE ART OF THE PALLAVAS

Art. But some of the portraits of royal pairs (Arjuna Ratha) clearly recall the *danapati* pairs or productive couples on the Karli and Kanheri caves. In this connection it is necessary to mention—the portraits of King Simha-vishnu and of King Mahendra-varman—accompanied by their wives (not reproduced here) which appear to be realistic effigies based on actual study—not yet idealized and refined as in the royal pairs on Arjuna Ratha. Except in the royal effigies—the female form as such is not treated in Pallava Art—which is mainly dominated by the masculine types of the *mallas*—the symbol of the military prowess of the Pallavas.

The mythology of Shiva-lila—has provided numerous inspiring themes for the chisel of the Pallavas—the earliest specimen of which appears to be the well-known Gangadhara panel at the Upper Cave at Trichinopoly (Plate 7). The rows of relief sculptures on the upper gallery of Dharmaraja Ratha (not cited here) and some of the relief panels on Arjuna-Ratha prove beyond doubt—that the full iconographic repertory of the sixteen forms of Shiva (codified in the *Kasyapiya silpasastra*) was known and illustrated in the Pallava temples (Plates 39, 40), the most complete illustration being provided—in the series of reliefs—facing the ambulatory passage of the Kailasanatha Temple (Kanchi). Many of these iconographic effigies in relief panels—had undoubtedly inspired some of the great masterpieces of Chola bronzes. By placing these Pallava iconographs—in a sequence of juxtaposition—beginning from the large Gangadhara Panel we could easily visualise the progressive development of Pallava Sculpture from its beginning to its point of culmination.

Besides the effigies of heroes, royal pairs, and Shaivaite Icons in relief—the Pallava carver has left ample evidences of his skill—in depicting all manners of animal types—elephants, tigers, lions, monkeys and even cats—which we can study and admire on the large boulder depicting the Descent of the Ganges (Plates 23, 24, 25). There is a particularly humorous study of a cat in its pretended role of an ascetic (*vidala-tapasvi*)—spreading out its front legs—in the posture of an *urdha-vahu yogi*. We can get a glimpse of this sham ascetic under the tusks of the elephant (Plate 23). The comment of Rene Grousset on this large relief of the Descent of the Ganges is worth quoting : “This relief (30 yards in length and 23 yards in height) is a masterpiece of classic art in the breadth of its composition, the sincerity of the impulse which draws all creations together round the beneficent waters, and its deep fresh love of nature”. (India, Civilisations of the East II, 1932, p. 228 ff. ).

We have to concede that the Pallava carver was a versatile artist—visualising all forms of life—and rising to supreme heights—in depicting divine images—and super-natural types. The Varaha incarnation of Vishnu (Plate 14)—is a magnificent visualisation—of profound cosmic feeling and of powerful dramatic intensity rare in the whole range of Indian Sculpture.



The Art of the Pallavas does indeed add a valuable and brilliant chapter to the history of Indian Art.

### PALLAVA ART AND ANDHRA ART

It is now necessary to study the relationship of the Art of the Pallavas with those of the neighbouring culture-areas.

We have already indicated the political connection of the Pallavas with the Andhras. In fact the Pallavas began by carving a small kingdom from the land of the Andhras. But there is very little evidence of any manner of cultural derivation from the great Buddhist cycles of Art which flourished for many centuries on the banks of the Krishna. The magnificent reliefs of Amaravati, Nagarjunikonda and Goli did not appear to have offered any lessons to the artists of the Pallavas. Though there was a theoretical possibility of derivation of elements from Andhra Art—we can trace no element whatsoever in the Pallava cycle—which could have come from the Andhras. Even an intensive comparison between the monuments of the two cycles of culture—do not reveal any manner of actual contact, derivation, or influence. Unfortunately Rene Grousset, a learned critic of Indian Art,—on the basis of a mere possibility of derivation, but without citing any actual parallels or analogies,—expressed a different view. “We may consider that the Art of Amaravati, as certain reliefs from Nagarjunikonda in the Musee Guimet bear witness, lasted till well into the fifth century—that is down to the beginning of the Pallava Period. This influence of the art of Amaravati on the development of Pallava Sculpture *seems to be incontrovertible*. It doubtless explains why the inspiration of the works of Mahabalipuram is less severe, more human, and more touching than the other Saivaite or Vishnuvite sanctuaries”. But this view emphatically expressed can not be supported by actual archæological data—and must be taken as gratuitous.

Stella Kramrisch, though less emphatic, has vaguely suggested analogies with Andhra Art : “Into these South Indian sculptures went something of the fleeting impetuosity of the long-limbed figures of Amaravati”. The slender long-limbed types in Pallava Art—do not develop—before 650 A.D., not certainly in the cave-sculptures of Mandagapattu, Dalavanur, or Pallavaram—the early primitive phases of Pallava Art—in which we could expect some links with Andhra—but none can be pointed out—in the decorative, or auspicious motives or iconographic characteristics or stylistic idioms of Pallava Sculpture—which appears to have a consistent and independent development.

### PALLAVA ART AND GUPTA ART

The relation with Gupta Art is equally hypothetical. Samudra Gupta's conquering



## THE ART OF THE PALLAVAS

arms reached king Vishnu-Gopa of Kanchi about 340 A.D. But at this stage the Pallavas had not yet developed an art of their own—and there is no evidence of any cultural intercourse—or any gift from Gupta Art. There is no doubt—that at a Buddhist culture-area—called Buddhavani in the Kistna District some bronze images of the Buddha, datable in the sixth century, had been dug up (Vincent smith : History of Fine Art in India, 1911, p. 180). This proves the penetration of Gupta Art—in the regions of the Andhras. But on the basis of this data—no direct link with Pallava Art can be suggested or established. There is a superficial stylistic analogy between the images of the Gupta Period—with the slender *malla* types of Pallava Art—but this does not support any theory of direct derivation from Gupta Art.

This is further supported by a study of the stylistic divergence—in the presentation of identical iconographic themes. Thus the earlier precedent of the Boar rescuing the Earth at Udayagiri (Madhyabharat), and the Anantasayi Vishnu on the south face of the Deogarh Temple (Jhansi, U.P.)—undoubted masterpieces of the Gupta Period—do not appear to have influenced the Pallava compositions of the same themes.

## PALLAVA ART AND CHALUKYA ART

The Chalukyas of Badami (550-800 A.D.) were the political rivals and hereditary enemies of Pallavas—proved by the repeated Chalukya invasions of Kanchi,—and, by at least one Pallava invasion of Badami. But political conflict did not forbid cultural exchange and borrowing and derivation of art-motifs, and of architectural designs. The Chalukyas were very much impressed by the architectural monuments of the Pallavas. As Dr. Coomaraswamy has pointed out : “The most important of the temples of Pattadakal date from the first half of the eighth century and show the strongest possible evidences of Pallava influence. The great Virupaksa Temple, dedicated to Shiva as Lokeshvara by the queen of Vikramaditya II and to be dated about 740, was most likely built by workmen brought from Kanchipuram and in direct imitation of the Kailasanatha at Kanchipuram”. After the conquest of Kanchi, Vikramaditya Chalukya—made gifts to the Kanchi Temple, and was so impressed with the images and other sculptures he saw there that he had them overlaid with gold. This is a typical case of a conqueror being conquered by the culture of the one on whom he inflicts a military defeat. After this—“an eminent architect (*sutradhari*) from the Southern country” (Pallava) was imported to build the Virupaksa Temple at Pattadakal—the coronation-city of the Chalukyas.

Yet the cultural traffic did not flow—in one way. The Pallava builders undoubtedly borrowed many significant elements from Chalukya Architecture and Sculpture from Badami and other sites. Many patterns of Chalukyan pillars and columns—*e.g.* corbelled capitals of Aihole Temple, and the large cushioned capitals of the Badami Cave—offered convenient



## INDIAN SCULPTURE SERIES

models for Pallava architects. In the repertoire of iconography—the Chalukyan artists have offered many inspirations to their Pallava colleagues. In the representation of *gana*-cherubims—on the Aihole Temples and the Badami Caves—have provided direct precedents to the effigies of *ganas* in Pallava Art. The *makara-torana* motif—on the facade of the Shiyamanglam cave, and of the Draupadis Ratha may have been derived from the old temples at Pattadakal (see *makara* ornament, illustrated on page 72, of H. Cousens' *Chalukya Architecture*, 1926). In many iconographic panels—earlier precedents can be found for later Pallava treatment of identical themes. Though some of the Pallava relief panels, such as the Sesa-sayi Vishnu (Plate 20) is earlier than the similar panel from Haccappa-gudi Temple (Prince of Wales Museum) is later in date. But the analogy is significant. The Vaishnava Cave at Badami (578 A.D.) offers earlier precedents for representing Anantasayi Vishnu, and Varaha lifting Prithvi, which may have influenced the Pallava artists who however surpass the Chalukyan prototypes—by their superlative stylistic grandeur.

But the four handed Dwarapalakas with a club—on the facade of Temple No. 9 at Aihole (Cousens, volume cited above, Fig. 11, p. 44) though earlier in date to the earliest Pallava Dwarapalakas (Plate 3) offer no direct link with the Pallava sculptor. Likewise many of the *lila-murtis* of Shiva on the pillars of the Durga Temple at Aihole (8th century) offer analogies but not actual link with similar representations of Shiva Images carved on Pallava Temples (Dharmaraja and Arjuna Ratha). So that it may be said that except in certain architectural elements, the relationship between Pallava and Chalukyan Art—is close but not intimate.

## PALLAVA ART AND CHOLA ART

In course of our analysis of the elements of Pallava Sculpture and Architecture—it has been found obvious that the Pallava artists developed many motives and patterns—which constituted the direct heritage of Chola Art. The temples and the decorative devices of Aparajita Period—reveal characteristics which verge on the beginning of the Art of the Cholas. The temple of Bahur (near Pondicherry)—in its plan, architectural schemes, decorative motives, and *deva-kostha* (niches for images) is for all intents and purposes—a Chola Temple in its beginning.

The termination of Pallava Art—is the beginning of the Art of the Cholas.

This survey fairly complete, if not exhaustive has undoubtedly proved that the Pallavas had contributed a brilliant and vibrating chapter to the history of Indian Art.







*Fresco painting : Sittanavasal.*

*Courtesy : Archaeological Department.*

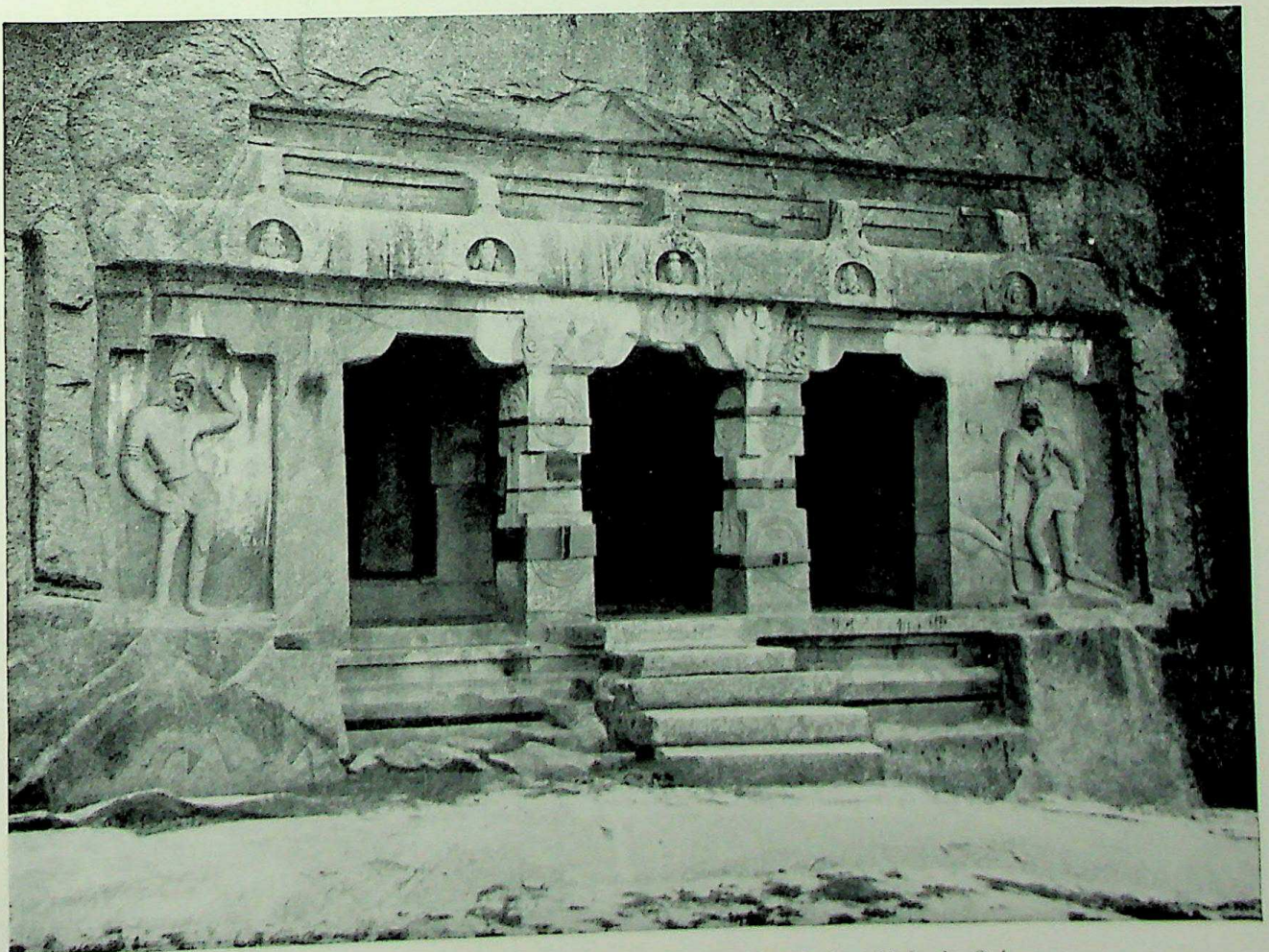








*Plate 1. General view of Mandagapattu Cave : South Arcot District : Mahendra Style.*



*Plate 2. General view of Dalavanur Cave : Trichinopoly District : Mahendra Style.*





*Plate 3. Dwarapalaka : Mandagapattu Cave : South Arcot District : Mahendra Style.*





*Plate 4. Dwarapalaka (left) : Dalavanur Cave :  
Mahendra Style.*



*Plate 5. Dwarapalaka (right) : Dalavanur Cave :  
Mahendra Style.*





*Plate 6. Parsvanatha in meditation : Sittanavasal : Mahendra Style.*





*Plate 7. Gangadhara (Shiva): Tiruchirapalli Rock Cave : Lalithankara-Mahendra Style (?).*





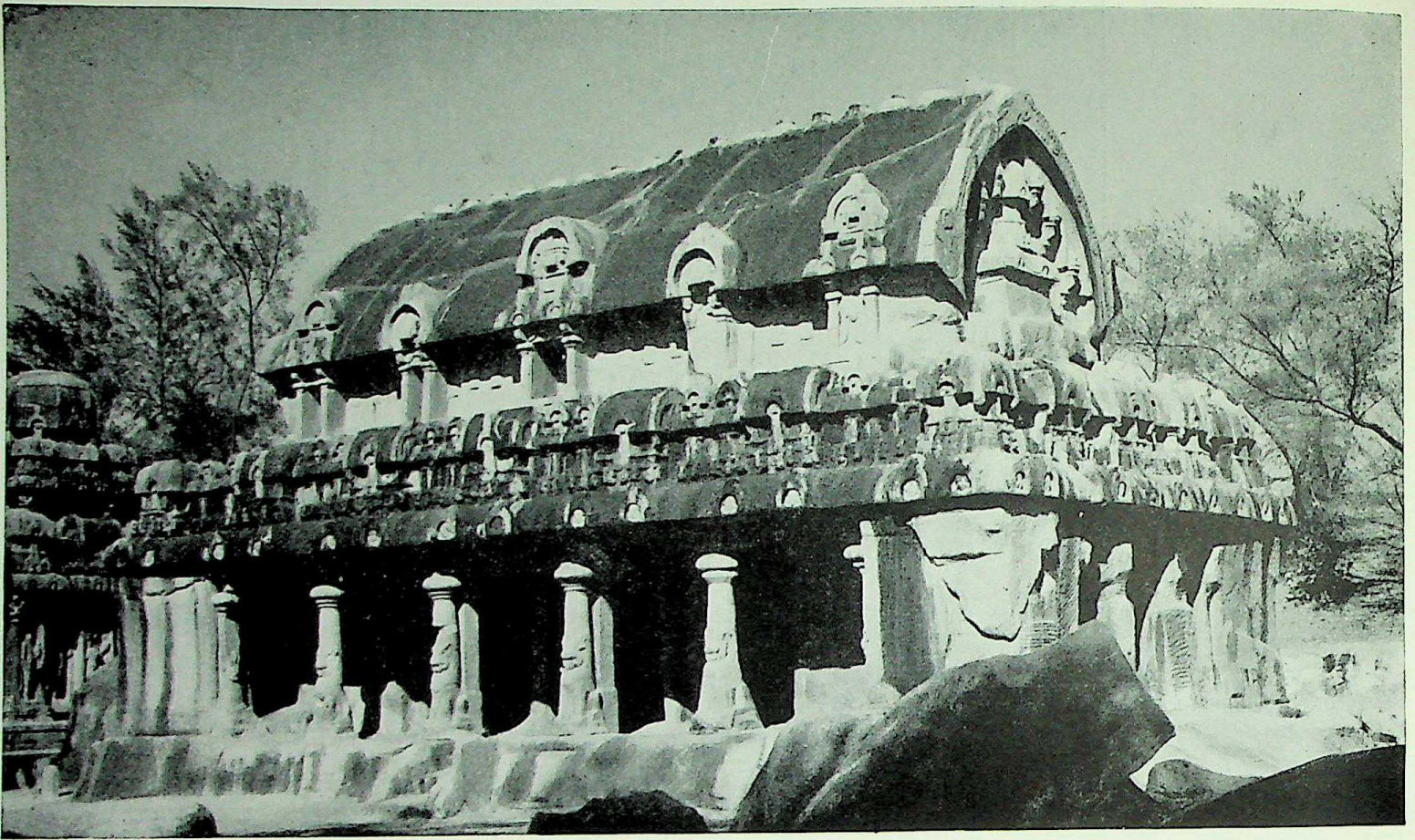
*Plate 8. The Five Pandava Rathas : Mamallapuram : Mamilla Style.*



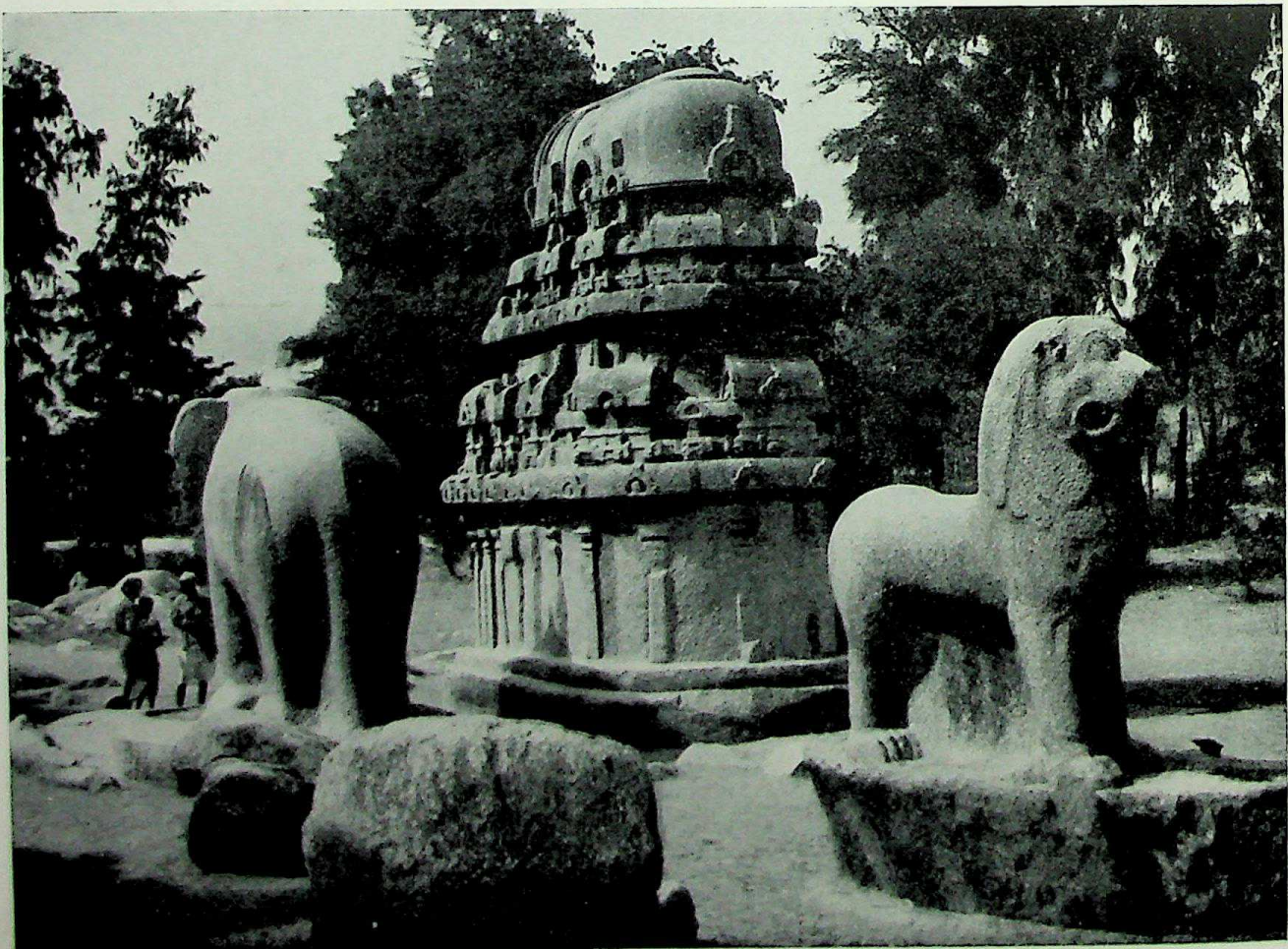


*Plate 9. Dharmaraja Ratha : Mamallapuram : Mamalla Style.*



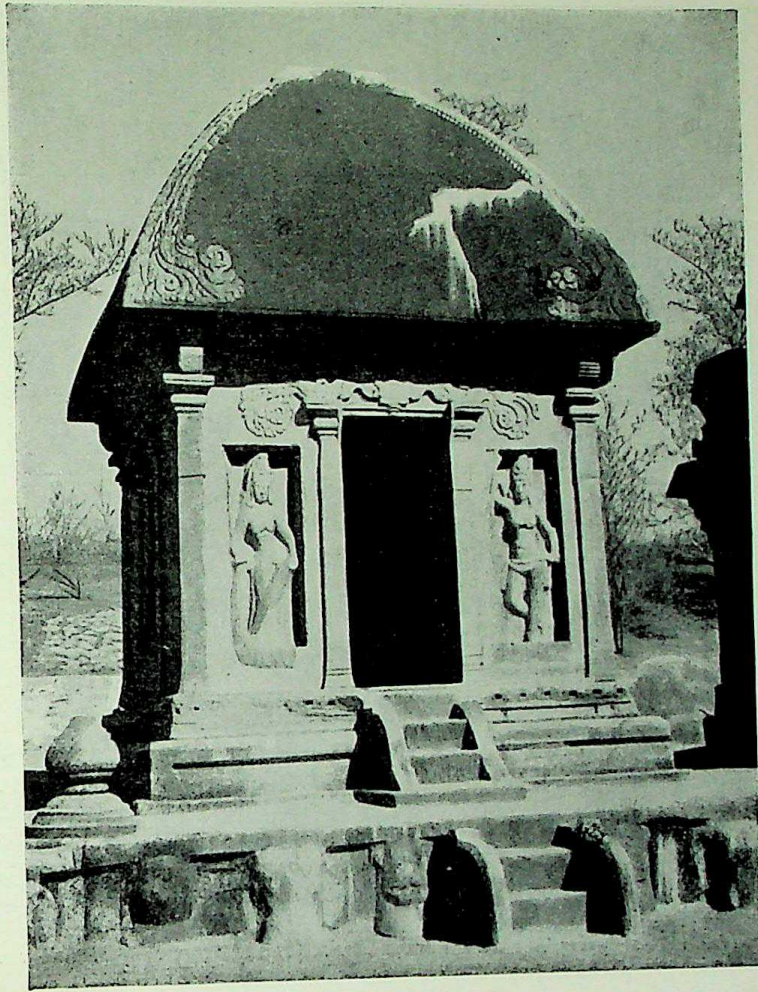


*Plate 10. Bhima Ratha : Mamallapuram : Mamalla Style.*



*Plate 11. Nakul-Sahadeva Ratha : Mamallapuram : Mamalla Style.*



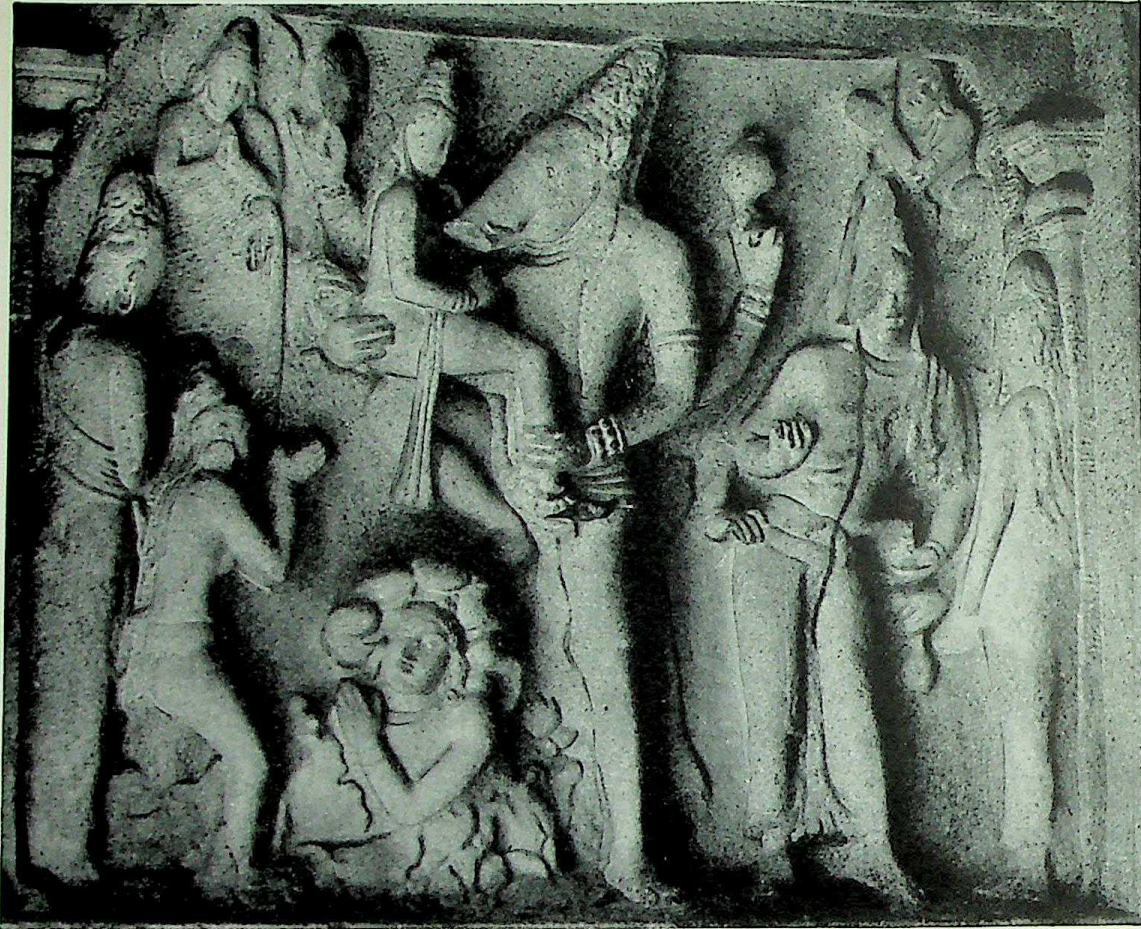


*Plate 12. Draupadi Ratha : Mamallapuram : Mamalla Style.*



*Plate 13. Trivikrama (Three Steps of Vishnu) : Trimurti Cave : Mamallapuram : Mamalla Style.*





*Plate 14. Varaha lifting the earth : Varaha Cave : Mamallapuram : Mamalla Style.*



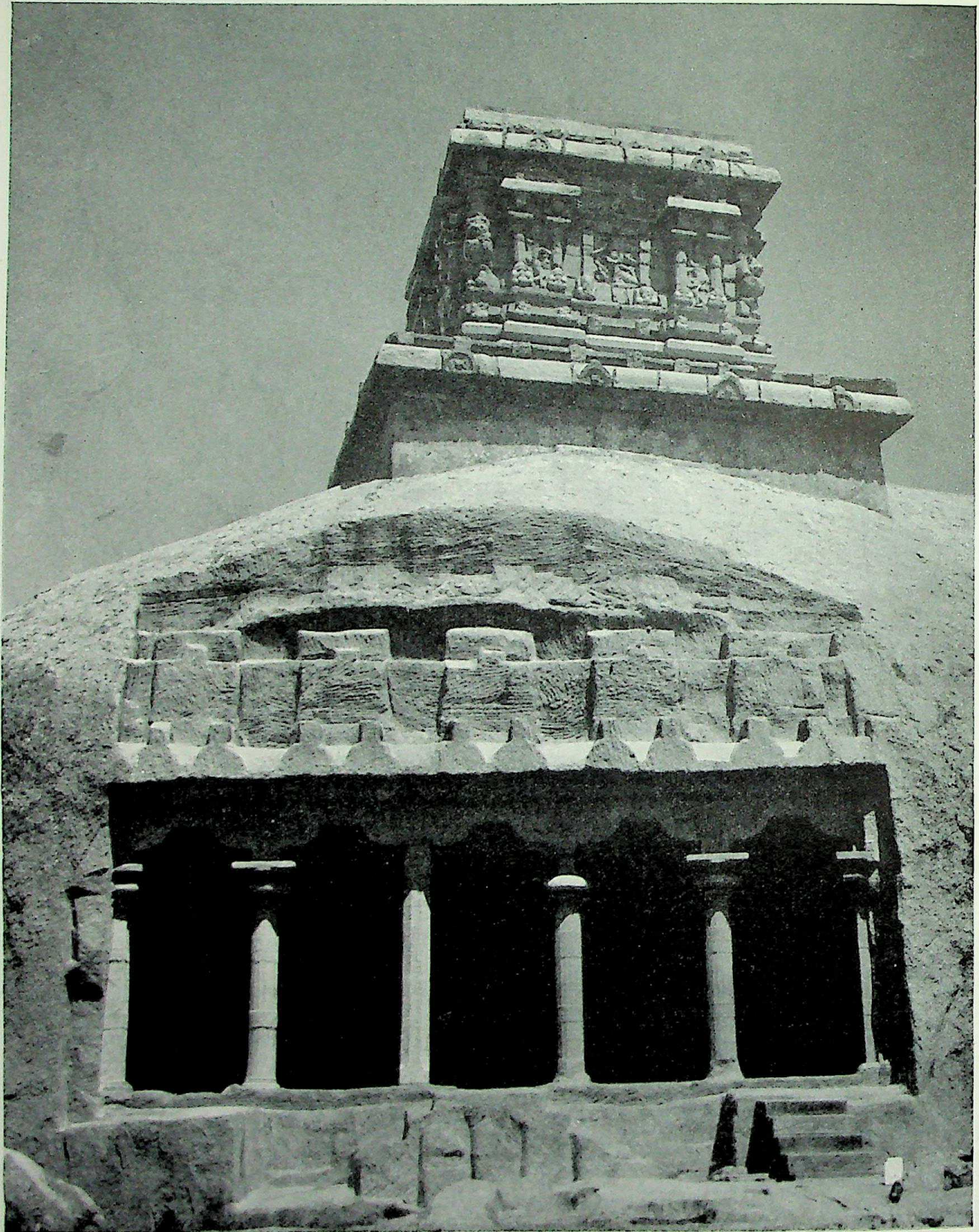
*Plate 15. Durga Pratihara Kali : Varaha Cave : Mamallapuram : Mamalla Style.*





*Plate 16. Durga : Varaha Cave : Mamallapuram : Mamalla Style.*





*Plate 17. Front view of Mahisasura-Mardini Cave : Mamallapuram : Mamalla Style.*



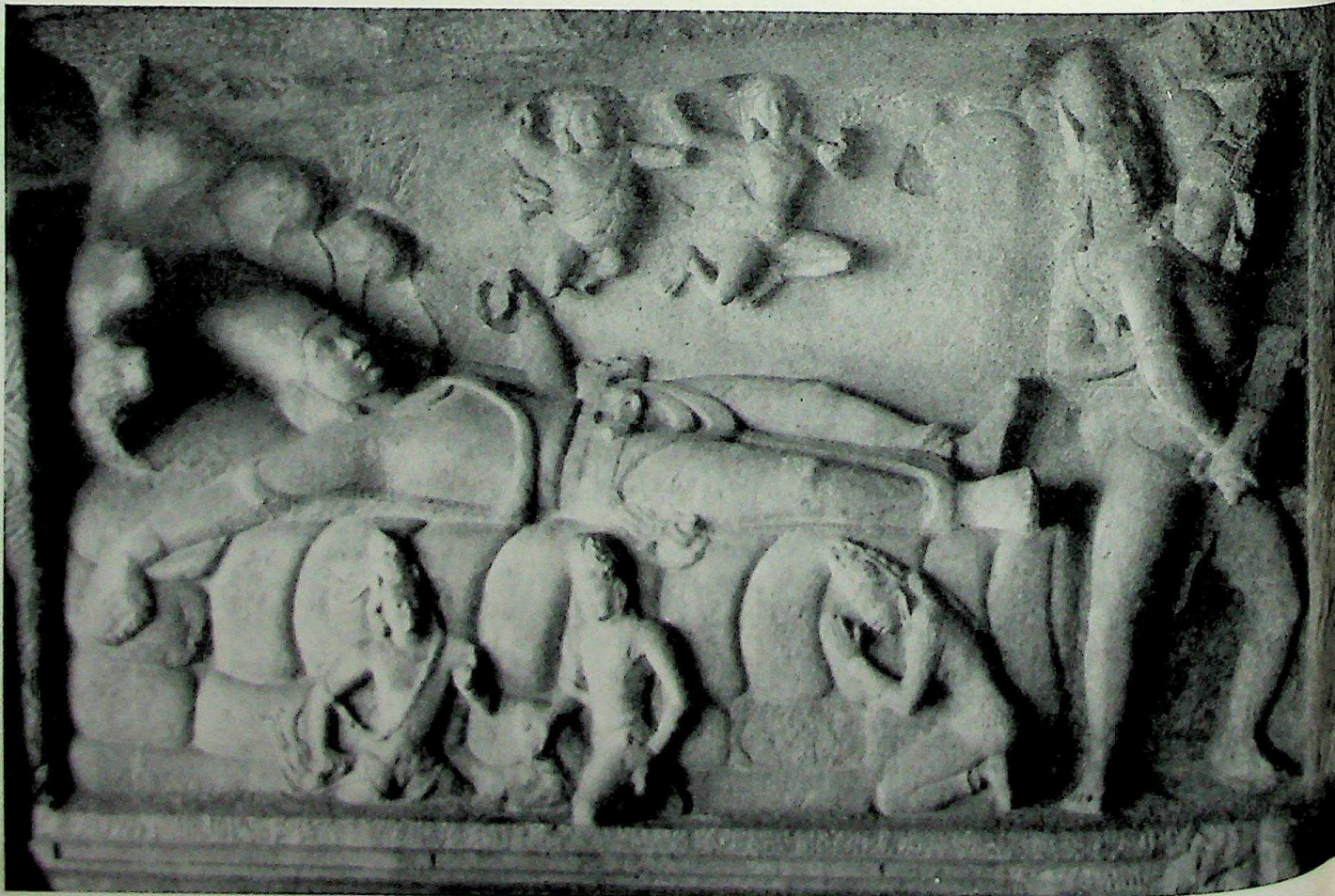


*Plate 18. Another view of Durga Cave : Mamallapuram : Mamalla Style.*



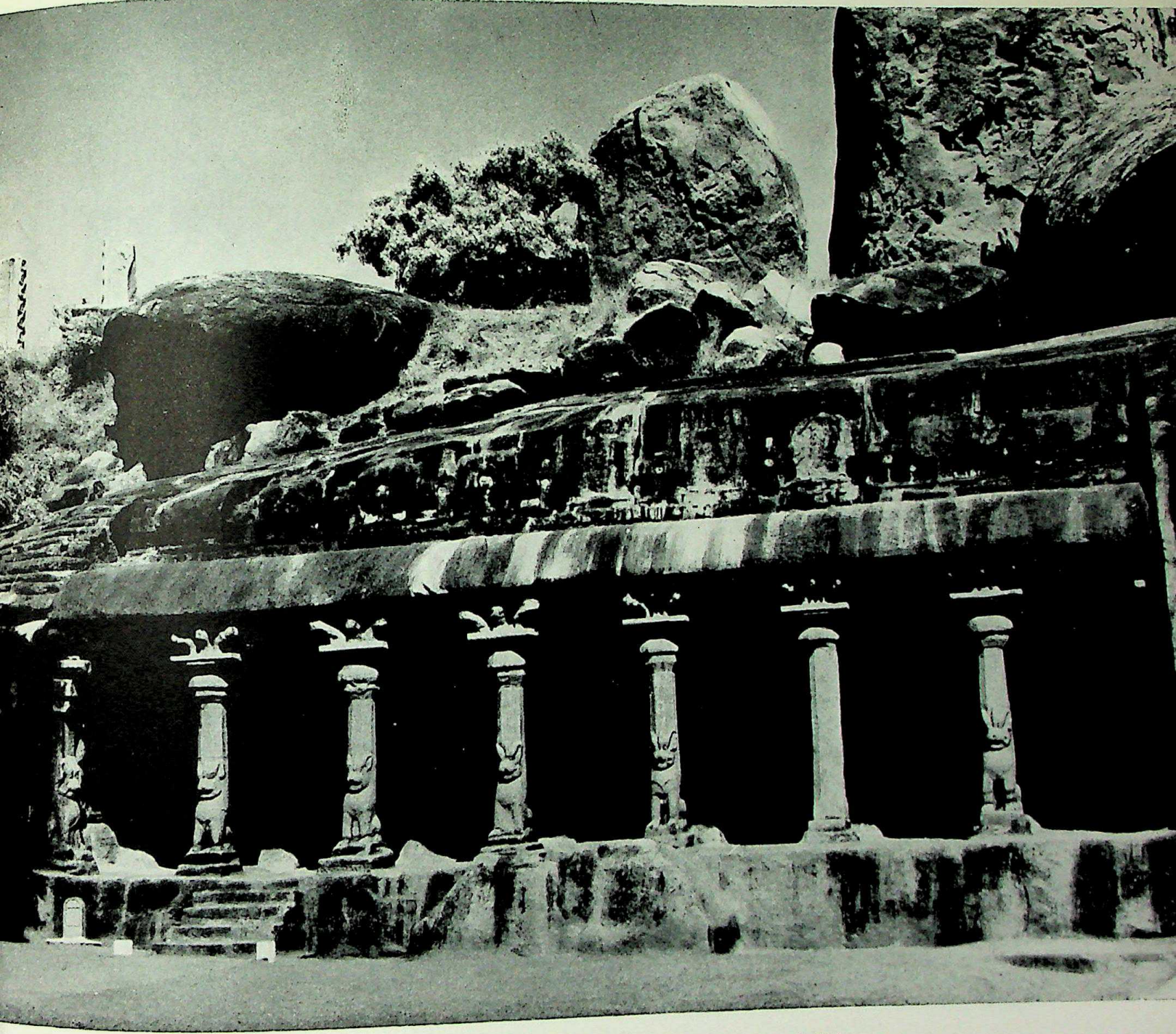


*Plate 19. Mahisasura-mardini : Mahisasura Cave : Mamallapuram : Mamalla Style.*



*Plate 20. Ananta-Sayi Vishnu : Mahisasura Cave : Mamallapuram : Mamalla Style.*





*Plate 21. The Five Pandava Cave : Mamallapuram : Mamalla Style.*





*Plate 22. Krishna-Dudhadhari ; Pandava Cave : Mamallapuram : Mamalla Style.*



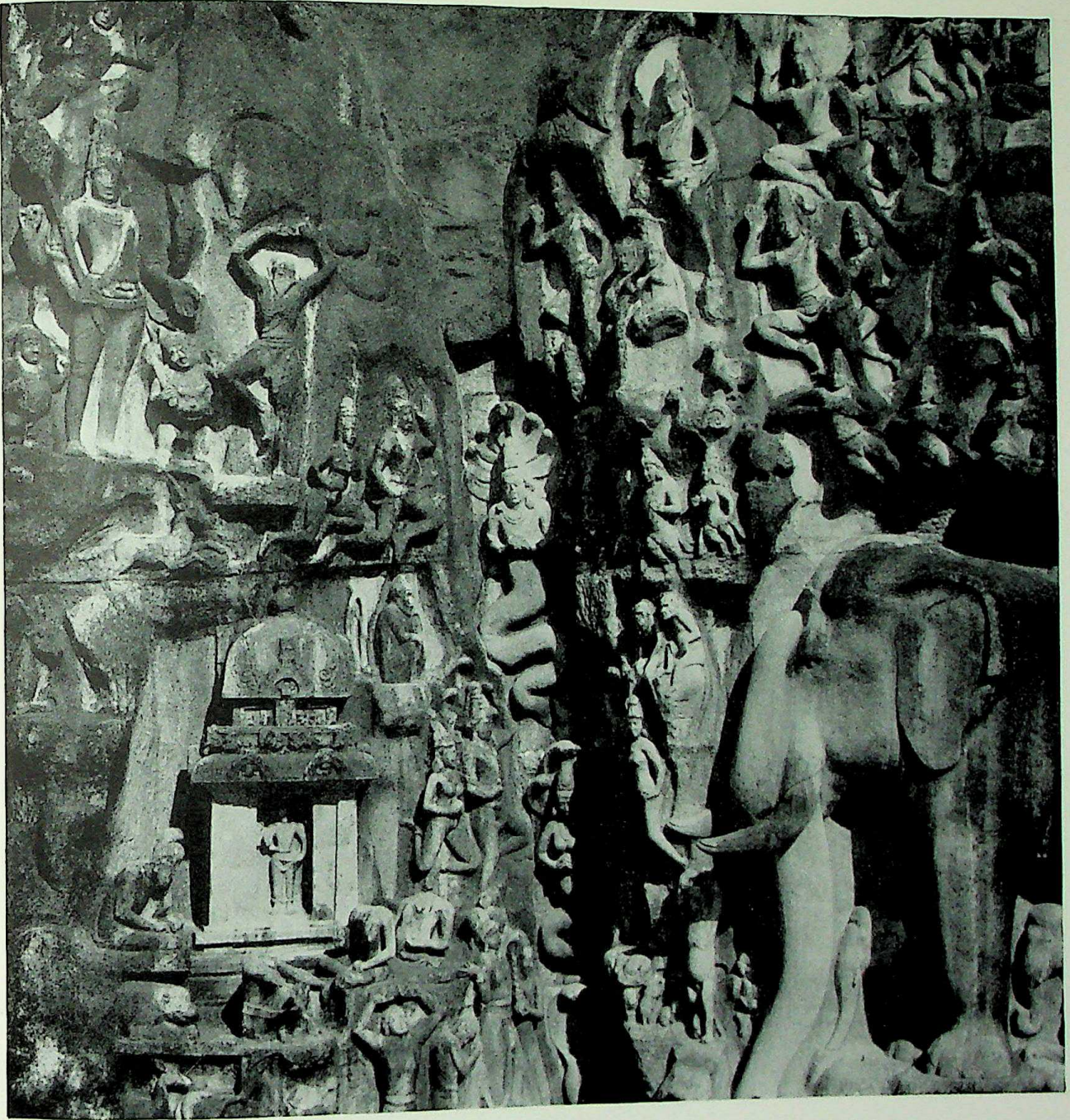
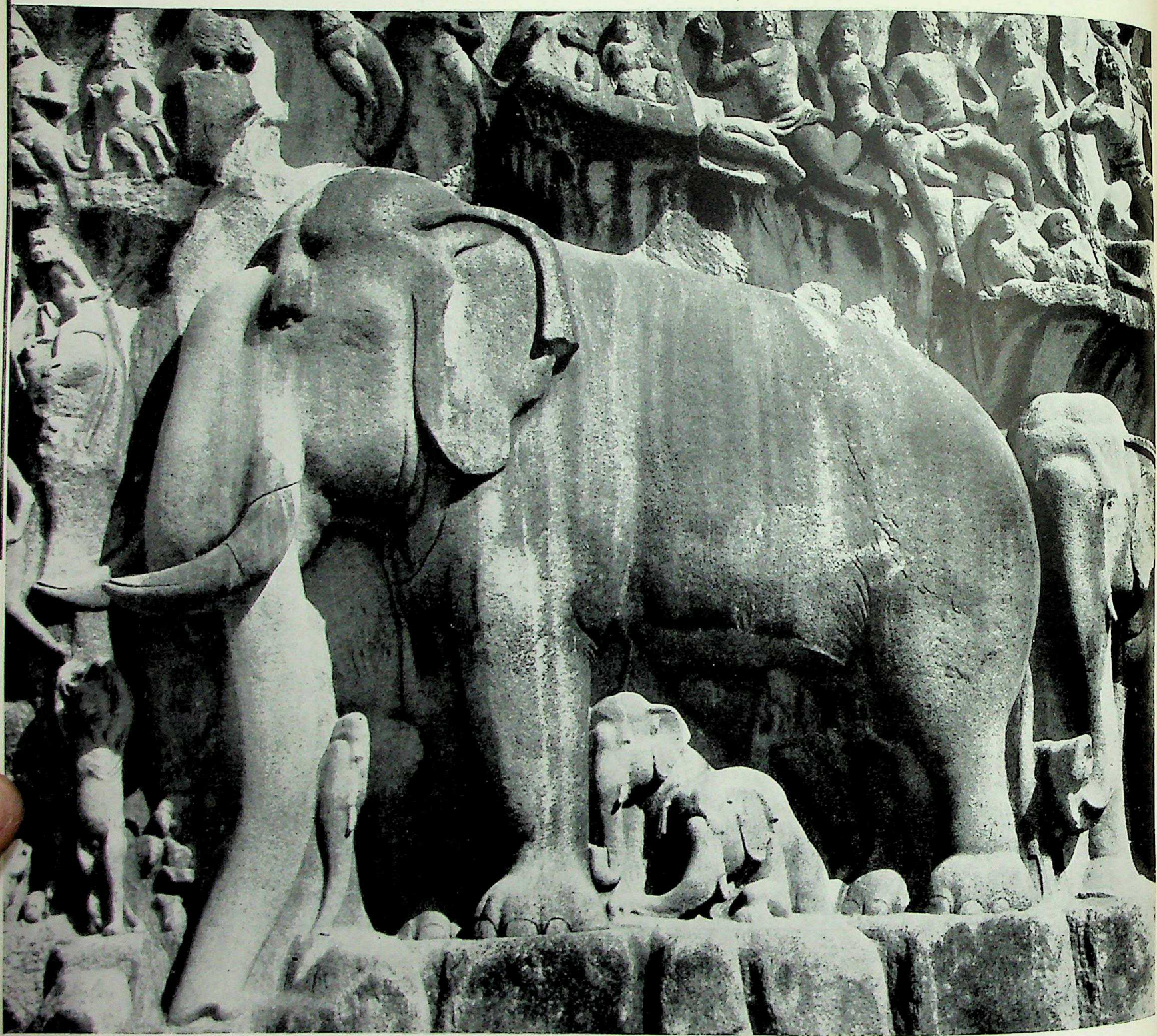


Plate 23. *The Descent of the Ganges (Central Panel) : Mamallapuram : Mamalla Style.*





*Plate 24. Right part of Panel showing Elephants and Kids : Mamallapuram : Mamalla Style.*





*Plate 25. Another part of Panel : Mamallapuram : Mamalla Style.*





Plate 26. Worshippers ; another view of Panel : Mamallapuram : Mamalla Style.





*Plate 27. Monkey Family : Mamallapuram : Mamalla Style.*





*Plate 28. Bearded Sage : Mamallapuram : Mamalla Style.*





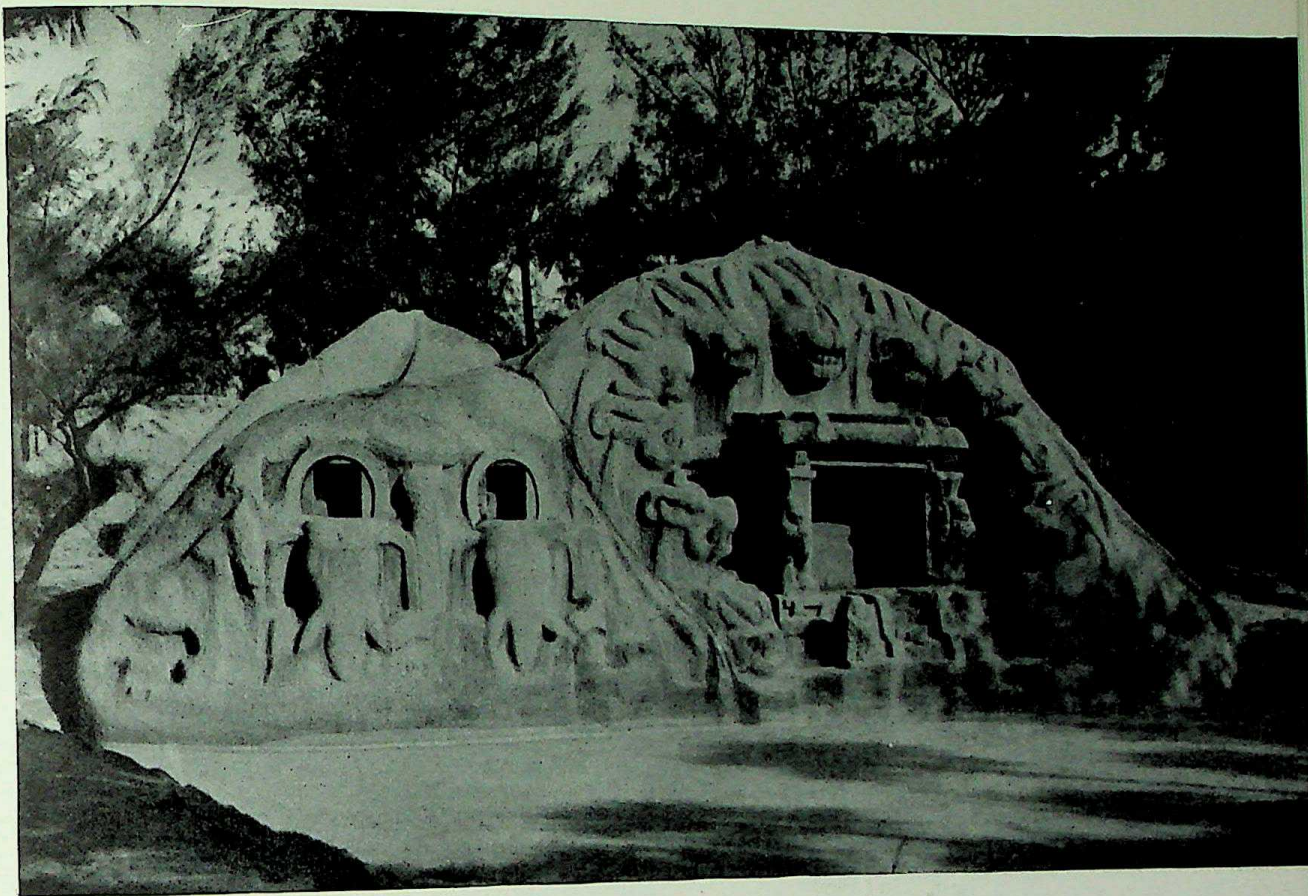
*Plate 29. General view of Shore Temple : Mamallapuram : Raja Simha Style.*





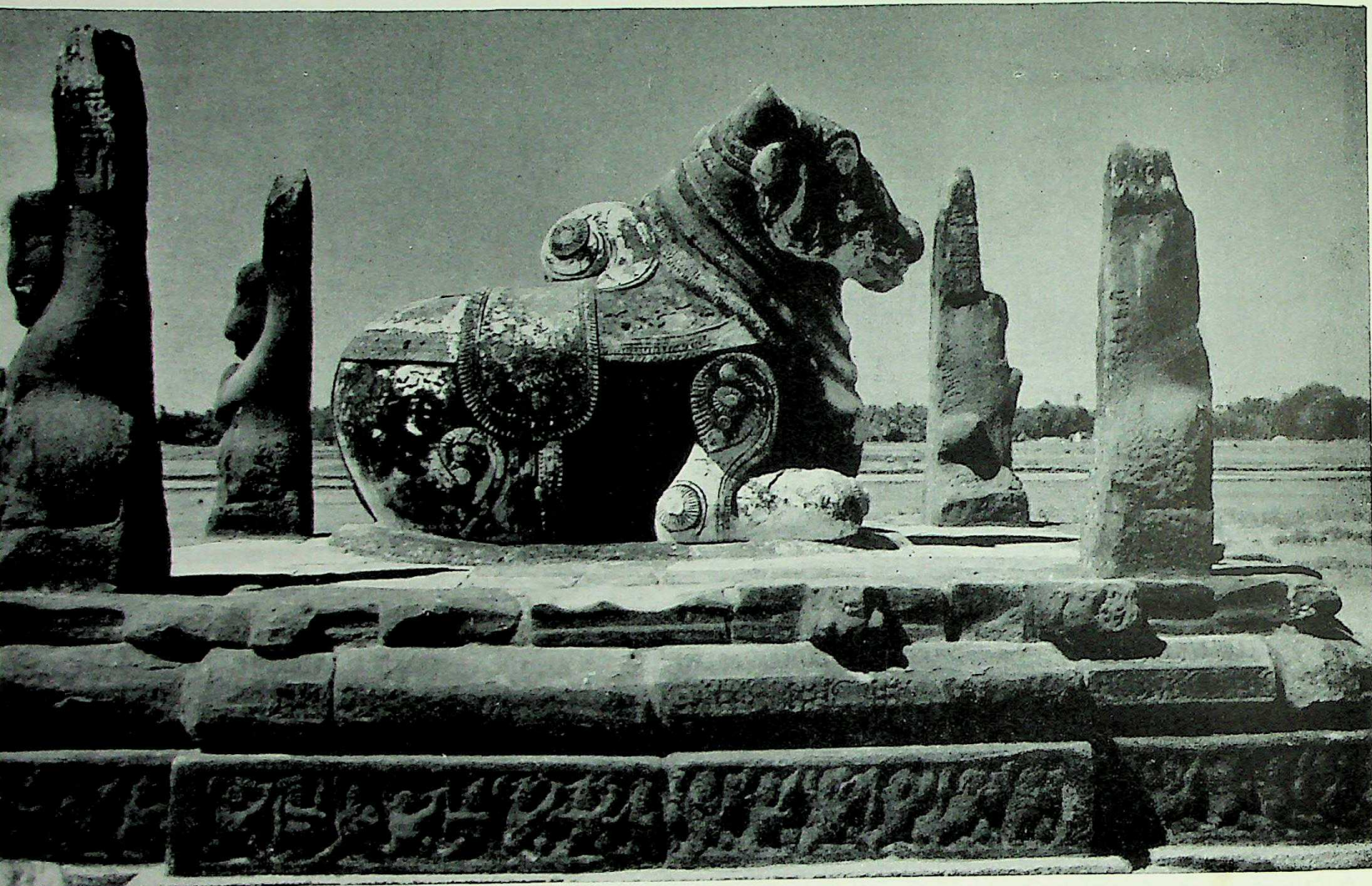
*Plate 30. Another view of Shore Temple : Mamallapuram : Raja Simha Style.*





*Plate 31. View of the Tiger Cave at Sullivan : Kuppam : Raja Simha Style.*





*Plate 32. Bull at the entrance of Kailasanath Temple : Kanchipuram : Raja Simha Style.*





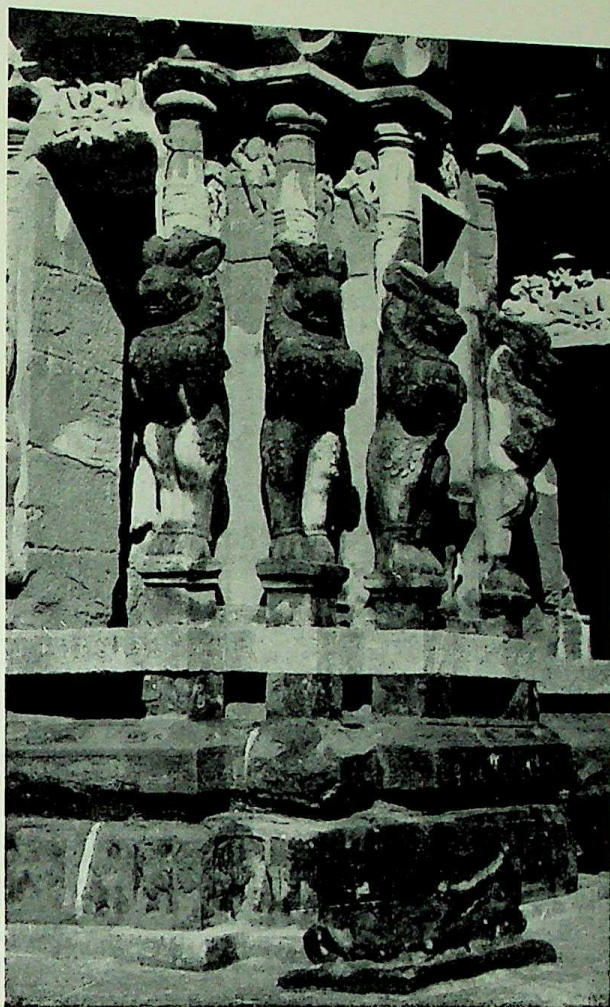
*Plate 33. Kailasanath Temple : Kanchipuram : Raja Simha Style.*





Plate 34. *Dvarapalaka* : Kailasanath Temple : Kanchipuram : Raja Simha Style.





*Plate 35. Pillars with Griffins : Kailasanath Temple :  
Kanchipuram : Raja Simha Style.*



*Plate 36. Ganas in a row : Kailasanath Temple : Kanchipuram : Raja Simha Style.*





*Plate 37. General view of Vaikuntha Perumal Temple : Kanchipuram : Raja Simha Style.*





*Plate 38. War Scene : Vaikuntha Perumal Temple : Kanchipuram : Raja Simha Style.*





*Plate 39. Dancing Shiva : Mukthesvara Temple : Kanchipuram : Raja Simha Style.*





*Plate 40. Gaja-Samhara Murti : Mukthesvara Temple : Kanchipuram : Raja Simha Style.*





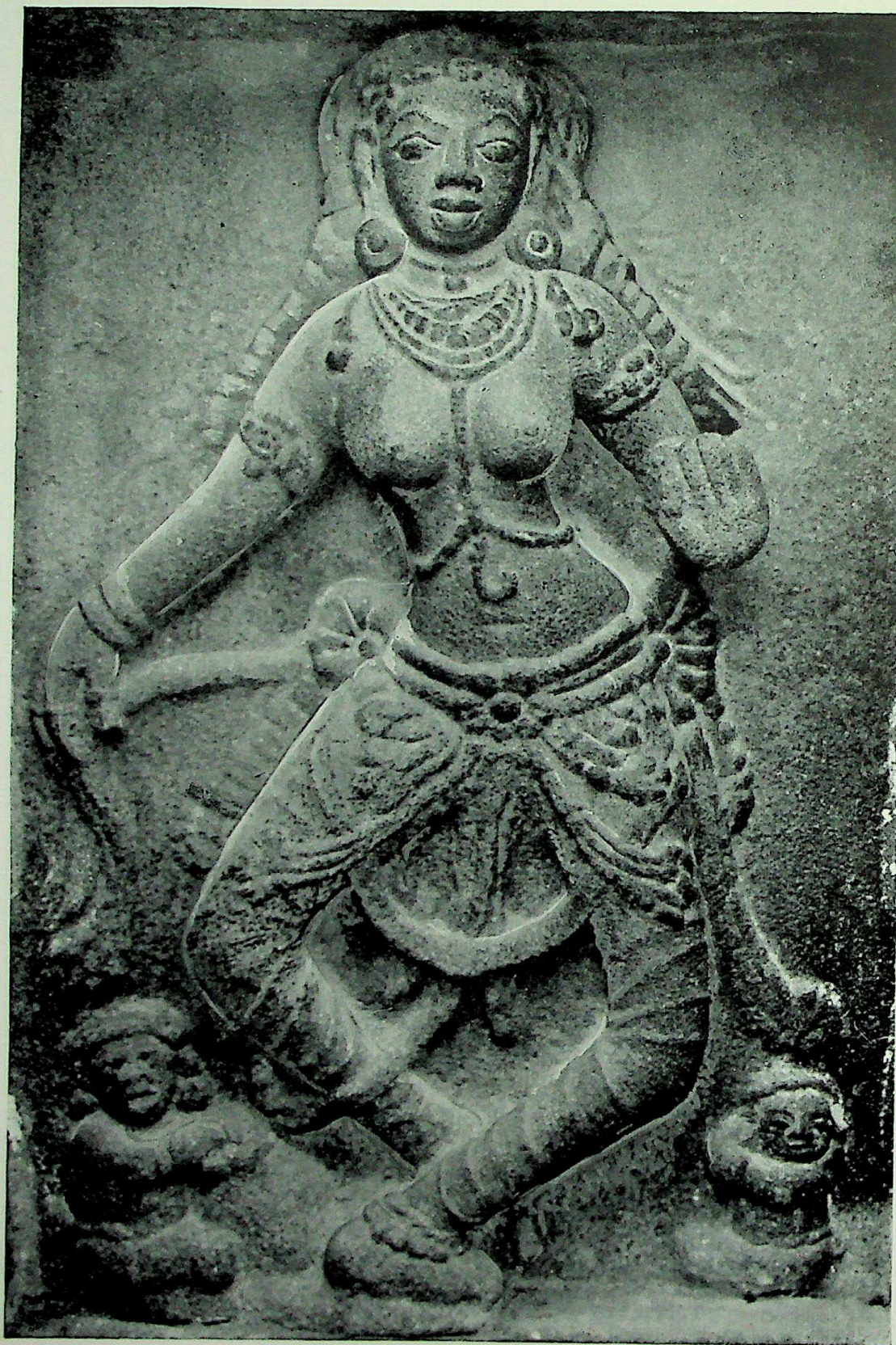
*Plate 41. Ravana lifting Mount Kailasa : Mukthesvara Temple : Kanchipuram : Raja Simha Style.*





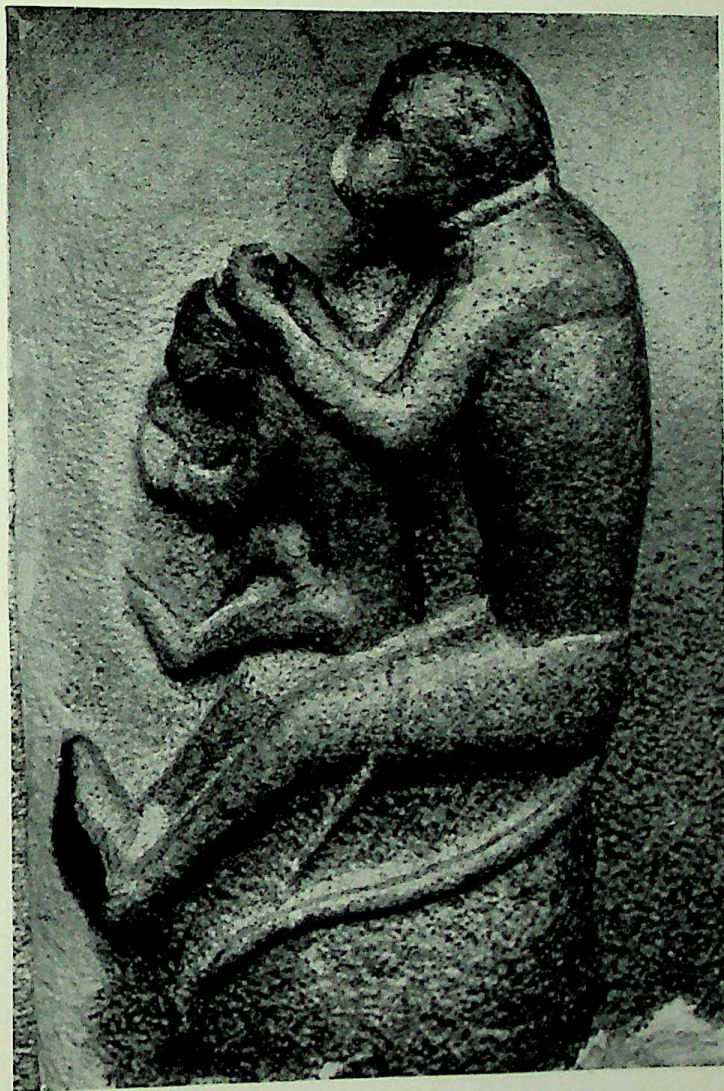
*Plate 42. Head of a Lion on a pillar : Matangesvar Temple : Kanchipuram : Raja Simha Style.*





*Plate 43. Dancing Girl : Bahur Temple : Pondicherry : Aparajita Style.*





*Plate 44. Monkey and young ones : Bahur Temple : Pondicherry :  
Aparajita Style.*





Plate 45. Surya : Tiruttanesvara Temple : Tiruttanai : Aparajita Style.

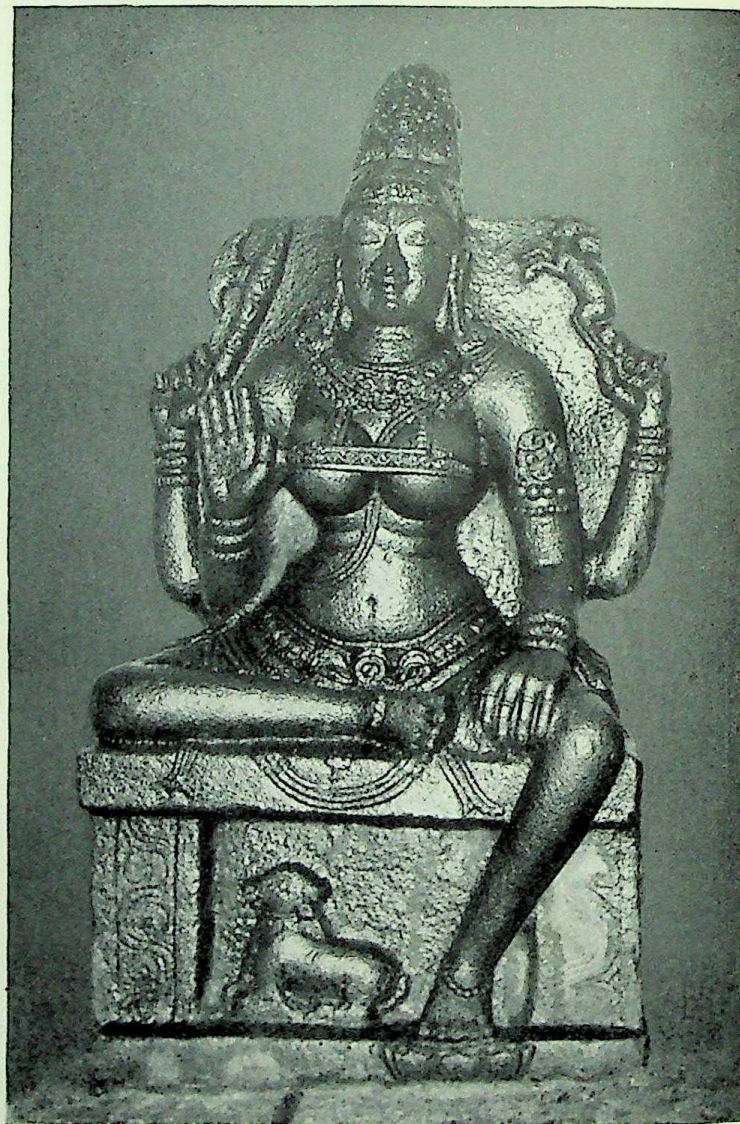


Plate 46. One of the Sapta Matrikas : Tiruttanesvara Temple : Tiruttanai : Aparajita Style.



## Descriptive Notes

Plate 1. General view of Mandagapattu Cave : South Arcot District : Mahendra Style. The Cave-shrine at Mandagapattu (South Arcot District) is one of the earliest excavations of the Pallavas,—indicated by the almost simplicity of the style—linking it up—with the Kundavalli caves. The pattern of the pillars, square at the top and at the base—and eight faced at the centre is akin to the pillars of the caves of Dalavanur, Siyamamangalam and Mahendra-vadi—assignable to the Mahendra Period, also confirmed by the palaeography of the alphabets of the relative inscriptions. The absence of the lotus-rosette marks the cave—as the earliest of the group. The door-guardians, carved inside deeply cut niches—are differently posed—though both of them lean against their clubs.

Plate 2. General view of Dalavanur Cave : Trichinopoly District : Mahendra Style. The development and elaboration of the style—from the crude beginnings of the earlier example (Plate 1)—are evident (1) in the deeply cut entablature at the top with string-courses,—punctuated by five *Kudu*-reliefs, with Gandharbha heads, terminating in *Sikharas* (pinnacles), (2) a *makara-torana* arch, carved below the entablature in low relief, and (3) lotus-bosses decorating the square facades of the two central pillars. The door-keepers, without clubs, stand in a meditative mood—with one arm posed at the hip.

Plate 3. Dwarapalaka : Mandagapattu Cave : South Arcot District : Mahendra Style. An enlarged view of one of the door-keepers from Plate 1—offers opportunity to study the beginnings of the characteristic relief-sculptures of the early Pallavas, anticipating the types—carved on the *Pakshi-tirtha* caves. The figure as it leans on the club, grasped by the right-hand, with the left-hand free—is very realistically and vigorously posed—with the weight of the body resting on the right-leg, the torso bending at the waist, leaning to the left. The anatomy is emphasised by delicately carved ornaments on the arms,—a chest-band, a sacred chord descending below the arm, and a fat string of *uru-malai*, covering the thighs. The typical cylindrical head-gear—below which the long tufts of hair peep out in two enormous bands set off—the concentrated, fierce expression of the face invisible. The types of these door-

keepers—is evidently derived from the warriors of the Pallava army.

Plate 4 and 5. Dwarapalaka (left and right) : Dalavanur Cave : Mahendra Style. The door-keepers of the Dalavanur Cave, are much gently posed weaker types, as compared with the fierce, vigorous type of the last plate. Variations are noticeable in the treatment of the *jata-mukuta* coiffeur, and the poses of the hands—with one attached to the hip—and the other held up—near the crown. The details of the several items of jewellery—the necklace, the chest-clasp, the armlets with four bands, and the jewelled wristlets—are carefully and delicately chiselled—and depict a less warlike type—with the club entirely missing. The sacred chord, and the *uru-malai* run across the anatomy. The right figure has an elaborately embroidered—waist band neatly tied at the centre.

Plate 6. Parsvanatha in meditation : Sittanavasal : Mahendra Style. The Sittanavasal Cave—a remarkable monument of Jaina culture of the Pallavas, to be associated with Mahendra-varman I, contains (besides Jaina paintings) one of the earliest images of Parsvanatha in meditation—after the cruder reliefs in the Badami Caves. The seated image carved in high relief—is one of the finest carvings of the Pallava epoch. The serpent-hood provides a beautiful halo round the head investing the image with rare dignity and solemnity.

Plate 7. Gangadhara (Shiva) : Tiruchirapalli Rock Cave : Lalithankara-Mahendra Style. This large panel in relief—carved opposite a Cave-temple on the rock at Trichinopoly—excavated by Mahendra—is the first complicated composition crowded with many figures—which we owe to the chisel of a master of the Mahendra period. Apart from the fact that it is a graphic and dramatic interpretation of the well-known legend of the descent of the Ganges, it marks the mature development of Pallava carvings—of which the earlier phases are glimpsed in the group of earlier caves. It is a remarkable composition fervently visualised and consummately executed—the central figure—exquisitely rendered in a *lalita* pose—the weight of the figure being placed on the left-leg—the right one being play-



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fully carried by a *gana*-goblin. The four arms are rhythmically poised, each in an individual gesture—the lower left arm is attached to the waist (*Katyalambita hasta*), the upper left arm handling the rosary (*aksa-mala*); the upper right arm—playfully stretches—a lock from the *jata*—as an easy spring board—for the descent of Ganga represented in a tiny effigy peeping out of the clouds. The lower right arm holds a dangling snake. The trident, and the antelope, the common *ayudhas* are here suppressed—to delineate a *sattvika* pose. The four figures at the four corners—two seated below, and two flying in the upper part—have identical theatrical gestures—with one arm raised to the head. They are the effigies of Shiva-*ganas* (attendants), unless the two below represent Nandi and Bhringi. The panel is a lively tapestry in stone—and has all the solemnity and dignity of an epic theme. The lower part of the picture—is an architectural piece—imitating Buddhist railings—profusely ornamented with lotus bosses. The single figure of Gangadhara in the Varaha cave deserves comparison as an illustration of the same theme.

Plate 8. The Five Pandava Rathas of Mamallapuram : Mamalla Style : Here we have a general view of the Five monolithic *Rathas* (chariots of the Gods), each called by popular fancy—as the Dharmaraja Ratha (extreme south), Bhima Ratha, (back of the first), Arjuna Ratha (next to the second), Draupadi Ratha (extreme north), and Nakula-Sahadeva Ratha (near the elephant). These five free-standing monolithic temples—mark the second stage in Pallava architecture—transferred from excavated caves—to structures in the open space. They were excavated during the reign of Narasimha-varman I and are the earliest monuments of their kind. Fregusson had suggested that “the square rathas are copies of Buddhist Viharas—but this cannot be justified from any surviving models”.

Plate 9. Dharmaraja Ratha : Mamallapuram : Mamalla Style : The Dharmaraja Ratha is a pyramidal temple—planned on a square base. The lower part is in the form of balconies with pillars—a new and developed form with squatting lions. The upper storey consists of a series of diminishing storeys each having a row of miniature pavilions (*panjaras*) the crowning cap being octagonal in shape—technically called a *stupika* (diminutive stupa). On the base there are four corner-blocks each with two niches containing standing figures—representing Harihara, Bramha and Skanda. One niche portrays king Narasimha-varman with a conical crown—with an identifying inscription spelling

the epithet *Sri-Megha*. On the upper balcony of the temple (not visible) is a series of relief figures of Shiva—in various iconographs of the *lila-murtis*.

Plate 10. Bhima Ratha : Mamallapuram : Mamalla Style : The monolithic Structure called after Bhima—is elongated in shape on a rectangular base. The top is in the shape of a barrel, punctuated by a series of niches crowned by deeply carved arches. The entablature (string-courses) is studded with a series of *Kudus* with *gandharbha*-heads. The barrel-roof carried a series of *kalasas* now missing. The ground floor—consists of a deep balcony supported by a series of pillars with cushion-capitals—rising from the heads of squatting lions.

Plate 11. Nakul-Sahadeva Ratha : Mamallapuram : Mamalla Style : The Nakul-Sahadeva Ratha—is apsidal in form (*gaja-pristha*)—evidently belonging to the Vesara Order. The lower part is divided by a series of low pillasters—the front being shaped in the form of a porch with two lion-pillars. The upper part—in two storeys—are decorated with miniature pavilion's. This temple was probably dedicated to Indra.

Plate 12. Draupadi Ratha : Mamallapuram Mamalla Style : The Draupadi Ratha—is a simple but impressive structure—with a sloping roof recalling the primitive leaf-huts of Bengal. The edges of this roof are ornamented with carved foliages. The doorway through two slender pillasters—is ornamented at the top by a delicately carved *makara-torana*—which spreads beyond the opening. The two panels on the either side of the entrance—are decorated by two lively standing figures of girls—called *dwara-kanyakas* carrying a staff by the right hand. This suggests that the deity enshrined is Durga.

Plate 13. Trivikrama ( *Three Steps of Vishnu* ) : Trimurti Cave : Mamallapuram : Mamalla Style : This is one of the large panels in Varaha Cave II, measuring about 8 feet by 5 feet 8 inches. It illustrates—the well known exploit of Vishnu in his Dwarf incarnation—known as the Trivikrama Form—with His Three Giant Strides—related with many details—in the *Vamana-purana* (75 ch.) and other *puranas*. Begging only three paces of land from Vali, the king of the daityas—Dwarf stretched himself to a Divine Giant (*vamano'bhut a-vamanah*) covering the earth and the heavens—the third step according to a version of the legend was placed on the crown of the Demon king. The story is dramatically illustrated in this great Pallava masterpiece—



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in a crowded but a remarkably balanced composition—with the standing figure—as the axis and centre of the panel. Measuring the universe in his three strides—the great god is the supporting pillar. The eight hands—hold the weapons—bow, shield, conch on the left, sword, club and discus on the right, the upper hand supporting the heavens—represented by the flying figures of the Sun and Moon. We find Bramha worshipping the God. The figures in the foreground—are the preist (with bell) and other attendants at the sacrifice (*yagna*)—in utter confusion. Vali himself grasps the right foot of the God—as the supreme refuge in his predicament.

Plate 14. Varaha lifting the earth : Varaha Cave : Mamallapuram : Mamalla Style : This is another great masterpiece—on the wall of the same Cave, of about the same dimension. It illustrates another epic exploit of Vishnu—in his Boar incarnation, rescuing our Mother-earth from the Cosmic ocean, the Boar-headed God stands in a strikingly static pose—holding the Earth-goddess—gracefully with his two hands—and affectionately looking at her. At the foot—is the snake-god Vasuki—who is to carry henceforth—the rescued Earth. Many Gods and sages have come to see the heavenly sight—amongst whom we easily recognise the four-handed Shiva. The legend is very summarily but effectively related in the *Bhagavata* : ‘Adored by Bramha, the Boar god dived into the Cosmic waters, and pulled out Mother-earth by one of his teeth, and placing her firmly by his prowess disappeared’ (*Sa Ca tena stutah pralayarnava—jala-madhye pravisya danta-grena Prithivimuddhritya nija-dharana-Saktya Samsthapya antarihita vabhava*) [*Iti Sri-Bhagavata-matam*].

Plate 15. Durga Pratihara Kali : Varaha Cave : Mamallapuram : Mamalla Style : This is a less known panel in the Varaha Cave—depicting the Kali emanance of Durga. She is conceived as an eight-handed goddess—standing balancing herself on her left leg. Her *ayudhas* on the right are the bell, sword and lotus ; on the left bow, shield and conch. The two hands in front are posed in free postures. At her feet are two adoring figures. On two sides are two standing *dwara-kanyakas* one holding a sword, and another, a bow. On the upper part are two flying *ganas*. At the upper corners there are effigies of a lion and an antelope. On the evidence of the effigy of the head of a buffalo—on which she stands—we may identify the icon as *Mahisa-mardini*.

Plate 16. Durga : Varaha Cave : Mamallapuram : Mamalla Style : This is another panel—in the

Varaha Cave depicting a standing image of Durga—gracefully posed in her *sattvika* form, on a lotus throne. The upper arms carry the disc and the conch—the lower right arm—in *abhaya* gesture, the lower left arm attached to the hip. Of the two seated figures—one performs the supreme sacrifice (*atma-yagna*), cutting off his head with his own sword. On either side of the image are pairs of flying *ganas*. At the upper corners—are effigies of lion and antelope. An umbrella is placed over the head of the goddess.

Plate 17. Front view of Mahisasura-mardini Cave : Mamallapuram : Mamalla Style : In this front view of the Mahisasura-mardini Cave—we can study a new development of the Pallava pillars. The earlier lion-pillars have given way to gracefully carved slender columns—with delicate ribs—terminating in a cushion—crown called *Kudam*. The shaft is divided into bands—with delicate decorations. One of the original pillars—now replaced by an octagonal shaft—has found its way to a foreign museum. The upper part of the facade roughly hewn with *Kudus* and *panjaras* was never finished.

Plate 18. Another view of Durga Cave : Mamallapuram : Mamalla Style : The front view of the Durga Cave—shows the open *veranda* divided by four pillars with strutted lions—carrying octagonal shafts—crowned by cushioned capitals—which may have been borrowed from the Chalukyan Caves at Badami. The upper corbels—planted on the horizontal piece—are ornamented with mouldings in scroll—first seen in the Trichinopoly Caves. The sloping string-course above—is punctuated by a series of *Kudus* without Gandharva heads. The finials, deeply cut into the rock—is decorated with a series of miniature towers (*panjaras*).

Plate 19. Mahisasura-mardini : Mahisasura Cave : Mamallapuram : Mamalla Style : Here we have another Pallava masterpiece—carved in high relief—on the wall of the Mahisa Cave—depicting Durga's epic battle with the Buffalo-demon. It is not a worshipper's image—but a story-telling relief—visualising and depicting the great battle—with realistic movements and actions of considerable verb animation. Rarely has this legend been visualised in a stone—with such power, skill dramatic effect. The goddess is surrounded by the army of *ganas*, while the Buffalo-demon is helped by his demon-army. The Umbrellas held over the heads of the two combatants are very significant. The legend is related in various *puranas* in different versions. The theme is treated with a lot of



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circumstantial particulars and graphic details—in the text of *Sri Sri Chandi*, a part of the Devi—mahatmaya of the *Markandeya-purana*. The legend is also related in the Nandikesvara and Kalikapurana.

Plate 20. Ananta-Sayi Vishnu : Mahisasura Cave : Mamallapuram : Mamalla Style. This large panel in the Mahisasura-Mardini Cave—depicting the Cosmic Sleep of Vishnu—lying on the couch provided by the coils of the Sesa-naga—known as Ananta-Sayi Vishnu—is another great masterpiece of the Pallava Sculptors: According to the legends of the *puranas*—the great god rests—in inactivity—between two ages of Creations. The theme has been several times treated in earlier schools of sculpture—as for instance—in a small panel in the Deogarh (U.P.), in a larger panel from Aihole (now in the Prince of Wales Museum)—and in a large panel on the wall of one of the Undavalli Caves. But nowhere is the topic—dealt with such quality of serene grandeur. The silence of the repose—is emphasised by the monuments of the two wrestlers (the demons Madhu and Kaitabha). The miniature adoring figure of kneeling Lakshmi—and two Vishnu-dutas, of the flying figures above—enhance the effect of a masterly composition—harmonising—contradictory feelings of tension and rest.

Plate 21. The Five Pandava Cave : Mamallapuram : Mamalla Style. The Pancha-Pandava Cave—one of the series of excavated Caves at Mahabalipuram—which provide data for the development of the Pallava Pillars. Larger in dimension though some what akin to the Durga Cave (Plate 18). The pavilion is punctuated by a series of eight columns (six pillars and two pilasters)—with the typical 'strutting lion' base. A variation is introduced in the design of the capital—with a horizontal bracket on a bulbous form—the upper part being decorated with lions and griffins with human riders the string course is crowned by a series of miniature towers (*panjaras*) carved in relief.

Plate 22. Krishna-Dudhadhari : Pandava Cave : Mamallapuram : Mamalla Style. This plate gives us a portion of a large panel in the Krishna-mandapa—depicting Krishna-milking a cow—which licks the body of the calf in front. The surrounding figures are a group of cows—with *Gopis* standing amongst them. The cow and the calf are delineated with lot of convincing realism. The theme has been treated frequently in later Rajput Paintings with moving poetry and lyricism.

Plate 23. The Descent of the Ganges (central

Panel) : Mamallapuram : Mamalla Style. We now come to the famous Carving—intensively spread over two boulders—divided by a narrow fissure—through which a stream of water was intended to run—to visualise the Descent of Ganga. Both in its gigantic proportion—and its animated sculptured reliefs—bubbling in its crowd of figures—this magnificent carving is unique in the whole history of Indian Sculpture. Formerly known as the Penance of Arjuna—it has now been identified as the Penance of Bhagiratha—to persuade the river-goddess to descend to the earth. The fissure between the two boulders divide the composition—in two parts suggesting the two banks of the Ganges—welcomed and adored by *devas*, *gandharbas*, *Kinnaras*, sages and denizens of the human and animal worlds. The hooded *naginis*—play on the waters and suggest the down ward progress of the river. The Celestial Elephant—which had attempted to the thwart of the progress—and was destined to be swept away—is depicted on the left—Bhagiratha is seen, undertaking penances (*tapasya*) balancing on one leg—and is depicted on the top of a Shiva Temple—the architecture of which is the prototype of the earliest temple-architecture of the Dravida Order.

Plate 24. Right part of Panel showing Elephants and Kids : Mamallapuram : Mamalla Style. Here we have the portrait of the Celestial Elephant—Airavata—standing in monumental grandeur—with its little ones—nestling round the feet—with a slightly bigger one—peeping from the back, the gigantic body of Indra's Elephant—stands as a Chinese Wall—to resist the Descent of the Ganges from the heavens. The figures of Elephants are introduced in early Buddhist Art—in illustrating the *Jatakas*. But the Pallava artist's treatment of the animal is independent of early derivation.

Plate 25. Another part of Panel : Mamallapuram : Mamalla Style. Here we have a near view of two flying figures—soaring down from the heavens—to witness—the sacred and miraculous Descent of the Ganges. With their tufted hairs—they can be identified as *Sidharsis*—sages who have attained *Siddhis*—the culmination of their penances. The movements of their aerial descent are depicted with consummate and lively realism.

Plate 26. Worshippers (another view of Panel) : Mamallapuram : Mamalla Style. This is another interesting group—extracted from the extensive frieze. Here we have six figures—in different poses, the two seated headless figures—are saying their prayers to Shiva—enshrined in the temple. The figures



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below represent—two Sun-worshippers—one looking up to the Sun the next bending in adoration. The third figure has come with his jar—to gather the sacred water of the Ganges. The fourth figure appears to carry a lamp.

Plate 27. Monkey Family : Mamallapuram : Mamalla Style. The Mokey Family—is the only piece of free sculpture—in the whole range of Pallava art, except perhaps—a Bronze image—which has been dubiously ascribed to the Pallava School. Coomarswamy has very highly praised—this intimate domestic life of a group of monkeys—It has a realism of epic quality—presenting an intimate realisation of the habits of monkeys—in a masterly manner. It has a highly sensitive way of depicting the theme—in a manner akin to religious emotion.

Plate 28. Bearded Sage : Mamallapuram : Mamalla Style. This is a seated *yogi*, with his typical matted locks—with a body emaciated by continuous penances. Very probably—the Sage is the portrait of Jahnuni—who had drunkup the waters of the Ganges in a mood of anger—and who subsequently released the waters through his thigh—thus assuming the paternity of Ganga—then came to be known by the name of Jahnavi.

Plate 29. General view of Shore Temple : Mamallapuram : Raja Simha Style. Here we have a general view of the Shore Temple on the edge of the sea. It is a landmark in South Indian Architecture—being the earliest structural temple in the South. It has been assigned by some scholar to the time of Raja Simha—on the basis of the inscribed *Virudhas* (surnames) of a Pallava king—designated as Atyantakama, Aparajita, Siva-Cudamani etc., which are ascribed to Raja Simha.

Plate 30. Another view of Shore Temple : Mamallapuram : Raja Simha Style. A near view of the Shore Temple—the smaller shrine in front has an independent entrance. The main temple—with a higher *vimana*—has diminishing string-courses and has a surrounding wall, covering an ambulatory passage. The whole area is bounded by a low *prakara*—with effigies of bulls. The extensive courtyard—is partly surrounded by an un-finished enclosure. The elonged *vimana* crowned by an octagonal *stupika* is stylistically different from that of the Kailasanath Temple at Kanchi.

Plate 31. View of the Tiger Cave at Sullivan : Kuppam : Raja Simha Style. The Tiger Cave—assigned to the reign of Raja Simha—is situated

in the village of Sullivan Kuppam—three miles north of Mahabalipuram. It is fantastically carved with a number of lion-heads surrounding the rectangular portico in front, on the next boulder are two smaller Caves—studded with elephants' heads.

Plate 32. Bull at the entrance of Kailasanath Temple : Kanchipuram : Raja Simha Style. We now approach the entrance of the Kailasanath Temple. It is a Nandi-pavillion with its roof missing. The four damaged pillars with effigies of lions—were the support of the roof. The Bull is in a convincing form—with most of the details, including the hump, decoratively treated. At the lowest part of the platform—there are long narrow panels—carved with lively rows of *ganas*.

Plate 33. Kailasanath Temple : Kanchipuram : Raja Simha Style. Here we have a near view of the Kanchi Temple of Raja Simha—with a low pyramidal *vimana*—attached to a flat-roofed *mukha-mandapa*. The corners decorated with rampant lions—rather clumsily carved. Inside a niche—is a kneeling *dwarapalaka*, flanked by two small *chauri*-bearers. The heavy rows of rampant lions invest the temple with an aroma of antiquity earlier than its actual date.

Plate 34. Dwarapalaka : Kailasanath Temple : Kanchipuram : Raja Simha Style. This gives a new view of the kneeling Dwarapalaka—wearing a *karanda* crown. The pillasters enclosing the niche are divided into compartments—decorated with rosettes. The pillasters are now developing new patterns—anticipating the Chola style. On the horizontal space at the top—is a Ganesha—flanked by lions and two *makaras* with riders.

Plate 35. Pillars with Griffins : Kailasanath Temple : Kanchipuram : Raja Simha Style. Here we have a near view of a row of pillars—elaborately decorated with rampant lions carved in high relief. They are the Pallava parallels to Greck Caryatides.

Plate 36. Ganas in a row : Kailasanath Temple : Kanchipuram Raja Simha Style. This vigorously carved panel—depicting a row of *ganas* in lively action—throwing up their hands and feet—in a mischievous glee. The Pallava *ganas* are a variation of the boyish cherubim of the Badami Caves.

Plate 37. General view of Vaikuntha Perumal Temple : Kanchipuram : Raja Simha Style. This gives a south view of the Vaikuntha Perumal Temple at Kanchi. The *vimana* a more elegant



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type as compared with the sombre tower of the Kailasanath Temple. The rampant lions are less obtrusive—and finely related to the architectural plan. The *mukha mandapa*—is crowned with a dome—for the first time met with in Pallava architecture.

Plate 38. War Scene : Vaikuntha Perumal Temple : Kanchipuram : Raja Simha Style : This is one of a series of historical scenes carved inside the Vaikuntha-Perumal shrine. It represents war-elephants and cavalry—marching to a scene of battle. The carvings are vigorous—and full of movements. The figures inside the *howdas*—are apparently king leading the army.

Plate 39. Dancing Shiva : Mukthesvara Temple : Kanchipuram : Raja Simha Style : A ten-handed Nataraja on one of the walls of the Mukthesvara Temple. The Dancing figure is flanked by standing Parvati—and the drummer dexterously playing on two drums. The miniature figures are *ganas* in various poses and gestures.

Plate 40. Gaja-Samhara Murti : Mukthesvara Temple : Kanchipuram : Raja Simha Style : This is another relief panel on the walls of Mukthesvara Temple. It represents—the *Gaja Samhara-murti* of Shiva—depicting the dance of the God—with the skin of the Elephant demon (*Gajasura*)—which he stretches out at the back. It is an eight-handed conception—the two upper arms stretching out the hide of the animal. Two figures of *ganas* and the figure of Parvati—complete the group.

Plate 41. Ravana lifting Mount Kailasa : Mukthesvara Temple : Kanchipuram : Raja Simha Style : This is another panel in the same series—depicting the well known legend of Ravan shaking the Mount Kailasa the abode of Shiva. The story is picturesquely described in the *Ramayana* (Uttara-kanda, chapter 16, verses : 25-26) : *Evamuktva tato Rama bhujan vikshipya parvate tolayamasa tat sighram Sa Sailah Samakampata 1251 Calanat parvatasyaiva gana devasya Kampitah, cocalo Parvati capi tadaslista Mahesvaram 1261*).

Plate 42. Head of a Lion on a pillar : Matangesvara Temple : Kanchipuram : Raja Simha Style : This is a detail of a lion-pillar—in the temple Matangesvara (Kanchi). It is a significant landmark—in the evolution and development of Pallava pillars. The effigy of the lion-head is presented with a realistic vigour which is truly wonderful.

Plate 43. Dancing Girl : Bahur Temple : Pondicherry : Aparajita Style. This is a fine presentation of a *Nartaki*—though lacking in refinement and grace of earlier phases of Pallava relief—this late phase—in the Aparajita Period—still retains the vigour—if not the grace of Pallava Art. The left hand is in *simha-karna mudra*—the right hand is stretched out (*prasarita*). The legs are crossed in *ardha svastika* posture. Of the two small figures below, one beats a drum, while the other keeps time with a bell.

Plate 44. Monkey and young ones : Bahur Temple : Pondicherry : Aparajita Style : Although a little stylised and showing definite signs of decadence—this piece of sculpture of a happy Monkey Family is another fine example of Pallava Sculpture. The mother affectionately picking up lice from the head of the baby in her lap—is most skillfully executed. It is quite evident that inspite of similar features the artists during the reign of Aparajita became weak and lost free style and movements.

Plate 45. Surya : Tiruttanesvara Temple : Tiruttanai : Aparajita Style. This standing Image—in *Sama-pada bhanga*, the flexion of equally distributed weight, carries in the two hands two lotuses—the characteristic insignia of the Sun-God. It is a close parallel—in stylistic presentation to the image of Surya from the Parasuramesvara Temple at Gudimallam (Gopinatha Rao : Hindu Iconography, Vol. I, pt ii, Plate LXXXVI) which Gopinath Rao considered as the oldest Sun-Image in the South. But the image, here cited from the time of Aparajita must be ranked as the oldest effigy of the god.

Plate 46. One of the Sapta Matrikas : Tiruttanesvara Temple : Tiruttanai : Aparajita Style. This four-handed Goddess—is one of the Seven Great Mothers (*Sapta-matrikas*)—to be identified as Mahesvari—from the effigy of the Bull (*Vrisarudha, Vrisabhasanasthita*). The implements carried in the hands—differ according to different contemplative verses—but they are derived from her spiritual spouse—Shiva. Here the two upper arms carry the insignia of Shiva—axe (*parasu*) and antelope (*mriga*). The lower right-arm in *abhaya* gesture, while the lower left-arm is in sleeping pose (*nidrita hasta*) coming from a temple of the Aparajita period—the last phase of the Pallava cycle—the style of the figure verges on the Chola plastic idiom.







